

Eng. & Pat. by J. B. 54.



G I D E O N;

OR,

The P A T R I O T.

A N

E P I C P O E M.



G I D E O N

OR

The PATRIOT.

EPIC POEM.

K
G I D E O N;

OR,

The P A T R I O T.

AN

E P I C P O E M:

IN

T W E L V E B O O K S.

Upon a H E B R E W P L A N.

In Honour of the Two chief V I R T U E S of a P E O P L E;

Intrepidity in F O R E I G N W A R:

AND

Spirit of D O M E S T I C L I B E R T Y.

With Miscellaneous N O T E S, and large R E F L E C T I O N S,

Upon D I F F E R E N T S U B J E C T S:

**Critical, Historical, Political, Geographic, Military,
and Commercial.**

L O N D O N:

Printed for A. M I L L A R, opposite *Katharine-Street* in the *Strand*.

M D C C X L I X.

G I D E O N

O R

The P A T R I O T

A N

E P I C P O E M

I N

T W E L V E B O O K S

Upon a HERREW PLAN

In Honour of the Two chief VIRTUES of a PEOPLE;

Intrepidity in FOREIGN WAR;

A N D

Spirit of DOMESTIC LIBERTY.



With Miscellaneous Notes and Remarks

Upon Different Subjects:

Critical, Historical, Topographical, Geographical, Military,

and Constitutional

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Printed for A. MILLAR, opposite the Theatre Royal, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXIX



INTRODUCTION TO THE READER.



THE Author of this Poem had begun one, on the Subject, many Years ago: but, doubting whether in the Plan he was proceeding on he had enough express'd the Sense of one who had the Blessing to be born and educated in a Land of *Liberty*, he had Discretion to stop short: and has postpon'd its Publication, for above three Times the Space prescrib'd by *Horace* for impartial Re-examination of a Poet's first Conceptions.—He now finds, from the Result of this Deliberation, that, tho' his General Purpose then was right, as but preferring the *Monarchic*, to the *Popular* Forms of Government; yet, had he, at That Time, gone through his Work, He was in Danger to have *err'd*, in one particular Point, of most essential Consequence: restraining Monarchy to its *too simple Species*—where It verges to, and looks like, Tyranny.

Early

6 Introduction to the Reader.

Early Prejudices are imbib'd too deeply to be rooted out at once. Experience, and Reflection, have, since, taught him, to *conjoin*, Ideas, which, before, seem'd *inconsistent* : and to know and own, as he now does, that Monarchy is there most nobly constituted, where Crowns invest their Wearers with the most extensive Power to *guard*, the Public Liberty : without Inducement to expect Increase of Happiness, or Glory, from Attempts to *violate* it.

There is *That* Difference, and no other, between the first, and present, Purpose of the Poem.—The Fabric is the same, as formerly : but It has firmer Ground, for its Foundation. —The *Hebrew System* is, and must be, *Monarchy* : but It is *such* a Monarchy, as God may be suppos'd, without Affront to his best Attributes, to have establish'd at the Head of a *Free* People : whom he would not, by a Waste of *useless* Miracles, have brought up out of Slavery to an *Egyptian* Tyrant ; to have left 'em *Slaves again*, in a worse Country, under Tyrants, of their own Fraternity.

The Plan, as it now stands, is strictly consonant to This Idea : And so little Difference could arise from the mistaken *Species*, where the *Genus* was *monarchical*, that almost every thing, in the *Poetic View*, retains its Place, as in its first Production : with Exception only to That nobler Taste of *Freedom* ; which the Writer ow'd to a disinterested, silent, and sincere Attachment, never confess'd, till now, to the unconscious Object of it. Here, first, and much too late, his touch'd Heart call'd upon him to record the Obligation.

It has been thought advisable to publish only Three Books at a Time : and with the first the Notes belonging to it. Partly by way of Specimen : but chiefly because relative to the Design, and general Constitution, of the *Epic Species*. —The Notes to All the Books, will, last, be publish'd, by Them—

Themselves : and may be bound distinct from the Poetic Part : or be annex'd to Each Book relatively ; making, so, *Two* Volumes ; at Election of the Reader : who may also, in this Method, chuse to take, or leave, the *Notes*, at his own Pleasure.---The Remaining Three Parts, of the Poem, will be publish'd in like manner as This First : and at the shortest Distances which can consist with Care, in the Revision and Correction of so large a Work, and where Variety of Subjects claim the closest Application, of a Writer, not insensible with what a Reverence Men should appear before the Public Eye ; who dare aspire to being held in View, beyond the Dimness of a present Prospect.

He presumes to call his present Prospect but a *dim* one, without Arrogance, or Satire : being equally remote from dreaming too *sublimely*, or too *despicably*, of the Age and Nation he was doom'd to take his Fate in.---He, but too well, knows 'em not the best dispos'd, in any Kind, for *giving Fame to Epic Poetry* : yet, must protest against so far misjudging his Contemporaries as to suspect it possible, that many should not now be living, as completely qualify'd, as in whatever other Time, or Country, to know how far a Poet has deserv'd their Notice : and refuse it only, where It ought not to be granted.

For the Rest, he casts his Hopes upon *Futurity* : and, having but a short Reserve of personal Claim to *Time*, transfers his Expectation of Survival, to this Child of Leisure, His *Poetic Representative*.

He has nothing further, here, to add, concerning it, the *Notes* being very circumstantial, and explanatory : only, that the Work (which is of *Epic*, or *Heroic*, Species), had for Object, the chief Virtues of a People : *Intrepidity*, in foreign *War*---and Spirit of domestic *Liberty*.

As for the *Notes*, they are not merely of: *poetical*, or *critical*, Intention: but consist, occasionally, of enlarg'd Discourses upon: different Subjects, drawn from old and modern *History*; to elucidate and give Examples, to, *political* Deductions, which arise from *Incidents*, remark'd upon. They are, also, *Military*, *Geographic*, and *Commercial*: and include Variety of other Subjects: as the Reader will discover in their Progress.

Among these Reflections, it may possibly give Satisfaction to the Learn'd and Reverend Body of our *Clergy*, in particular, to see the following three Points touch'd, in the new Lights here given them.

1st, That the fine *Theocracy*, of the *Mosaic* Institution, was destroy'd, in its Progression, but by natural Consequence of one political Defect (that has not been enough adverted to, by Writers on that Subject), *the Military Care disjoin'd from the Imperial*.

2dly, That the *Hebrew* Form of Government was never, as it has by Mr. *Harrington* (and almost generally) been suppos'd, a *Popular Republic*: but a plain *Hereditary Monarchy*: the sovereign Power whereof was vested in the *High-Priest's* Person.

And 3dly, That, with Exception only to this last *peculiar* Circumstance, there arise great Probabilities, toward finding in the first establish'd *Hebrew Model*, the Original of All the manly *Celtic Forms*: and, in particular, of That, which constitutes the *present System in Great Britain*;—not relaxing from its, known, sound Principles.

Thus much seem'd needful to premise. What rests, will follow, with the *Notes*, conjunctively: Those on the first Book being publish'd previously, because explanatory of the *General Purpose*.

G I D E O N;



G I D E O N;

O R,

The P A T R I O T.

B O O K I.

I.

GLOWING pure, with hallow'd Fire,
Seek, O Soul! some heav'nly Theme:

But, bid no Muse thy Flights inspire;

Vain the Hope, the Name a *Dream*.

Thou! Great, Almighty *Spirit!* tune my Verse;

Accept my Offring, sacred to thy Praise:

And while, unfit, thy Wonders I rehearse,

Strike Thy keen Lustre, sparkling, through my Lays.

Long, too long! the wand'ring *Art*,

Aw'd by *Power*, by *Beauty* charm'd,

Low has stoop'd to sooth the *Heart*:

And, with a *smoaky* Fire, the Passions warm'd.

B

But

But *Thou!* Great Origin of Harmony!

Breathe through *my* Numbers a *diviner* Strain:

And, as thy Servant *Gideon*, blest'd by *Thee*,

Broke his freed Country's hard-oppressive Chain,

So, now, all-pow'rful Guide! invig'rate *me*,

Successful, to redeem the *Use*, of long-lost *Poetry!*

Thou, the Great *Author*, of the Theme I chuse,

Inspire me, to describe it well: and be, *Thyself*, my *Muse*.

II.

War is my Subject: and That fav'rite Hand

Which, arm'd by Heav'n, redeem'd a chosen Race;

When, scarce yet warm in their new-gifted Land,

Wilful they started from protective Grace.

At length, provok'd, their High Deliv'rer vow'd

To pay with sharp Revenge their dull Disdain:

And, while, to *Baal* and *Ashtaroth*, they bow'd,

Justly, he bent their stubborn Necks to Pain:

And left 'em Slaves, to serve the *Men*, whose *Gods* they serv'd in vain.

Then, *Gideon*, wise and generous Leader! rose;

And taught faint *Israel*, by his strange Success,

That Loss of Freedom, from *Corruption* flows:

And *Virtue's* Sense restor'd, repels Distress.

Greatly determin'd, and sublimely brave,

From a low Fortune, and a Race obscure,

He, who well the Diff'rence knew,

'Twixt being *base*, and being *poor*,

Dar'd noblest Hopes, with humblest Means, pursue:

Shew'd

Shew'd the just Pref'ence of a balanc'd Power,
 Where *Prince* and *Senate* pause, o'er weigh'd *Debate* ;
 To those *blown Clouds* which o'er Dominion *lowre*,
 Where headless Hands, disjointly rash, perplex a struggling State.
 When Sons of Faction, born to *mis-compose*,
 Dar'd, proudly wanton, bid Rebellion reign ;
 Unvers'd in Rule, while o'er their Friends they rose,
 To fall disgraceful, at the Feet of Foes,
Him, did the God of nobler Hopes *ordain* :
He, when his Country's just *Despair* scarce Heav'n's high Aid implor'd,
 Redeem'd, Alone, th'unhoping Land : and her *lost Law* restor'd.
 Hail, divine Impulse ! — I thy Force obey.
 Hail, glorious Theme, mark'd out by Heav'n, *Heav'n's Influence*, to *display* !
 And Thou, *directive Spirit* ! shine : to point my blazing Way.

III.

But, while I rouse th'immerg'd in Doubt, God's wond'rous Paths to *see*,
 What *human* Power shall I invoke, for Aid ?
 What PATRON, to protect my Verse, and me,
 And lead *lost Taste*, through Discord's *eyeless* Shade ?
 Why ask I this ? ---- Shame, on the low Desire !
 Not *Earth's* dim Fuel feeds celestial Fire.
 Shine clear, my Soul ! shun *Flatt'ry's* reptile Way :
 Nor court th'imperious *Puddlers*, of a *Day*.
 On strong Foundation, thy white Building raise :
 Nor *stain* thy Subject by misguided Praise.
 Not to *Pride's transient Phantoms*, poorly, kneel :
 But, bid thy Work, that hopes immortal Fame,
 Outsoaring *Arrogance*, to *Worth* appeal :
 And bow, before some *world-ennobling* Name.

IV.

Hail, BOLINGBROKE! --- from thy *still* Heights descend;
 Come, Virtue's Heart, Wit's Soul, and Reason's Friend!
All the charm'd Muses *Tbine*, the Least, now *hear*.
 Why should they stoop to Kings, while *Thou* art near?
 O, come ---- What Name shall influent Rapture find?
 Great luminary *Leader*, of the Mind!
 Ev'n could the Poet *please*, the Power were *stole*;
 THY *Sense* of *Freedom* stretch'd his Muse's SOUL.
 Erring, where *Thousands* *err'd*, in Youth's hot Start,
 Propulsive *Prejudice* had *warp'd* his Heart;
 Bold, and too loud he sigh'd, for *high* Distress,
 Fond of the *Fall'n*, nor form'd to serve *Success*;
 Partial to Woes, had weigh'd their *Cause* too light,
 Wept o'er Misfortune ---- and misnam'd it, *Right*:
 Anguish, attracting, turn'd Attachment wrong,
 And Pity's Note *mis-tun'd* his devious Song.
 Timely, thy home-bent Radiance, re-display'd,
 Struck the dim Doubter, and dispell'd the Shade.
 Cool-ey'd Reflection check'd th' enthusiast Rhyme,
 And won the blushful Bigot, from his Crime.
 — Oh! as his *Heart*, then, catch'd thy Patriot Glow,
 Now, could his *Verse*, like thy sweet Accents, flow,
 Music's whole Power should strike the vocal String,
 And ev'ry Bird of *Pindus* clap the Wing.
 Guided, he mark'd the *interposing* MOUND,
 Which *Licence* *bursting*, *Liberty* were drown'd:
 Which *Monarchy*, *transcending*, tow'rs to fall;
 And, grasping more than granted, gives up *All*.

— Hap-

— Happiest of Men! most *rais'd* of Sov'reigns! *He*,
Liege-Lord of *Lovers*! Foremost of the *Free*!
Who scorns *Prerogative*, to taint his Will,
And reigns o'er ev'n the *Power*, to *purpose* ill.
Who shows majestic Royalty's *plain* Face,
With Dignity's unmask'd, *paternal* Grace;
Secur'd of *Rev'rence*, spurns *tyrannic Awe*,
And *stars* his Heav'n of Pow'r with Lights of *Law*;
Safely displuming *Pride's* imperious Crest,
And lodging Sense of *Greatest*, but in *Best*.

V.

Such were a ST. JOHN's *Thoughts*—such, *once*, his *Crimes*,
Doom'd, like a *Lapland Sun*, to down-bent Climes.
Strait was his Beam, but every *breaking Ray*,
Loft on th'*oblique Declension*, SEEM'D to stray.
—Off with the *veily Metaphor's* cold Shade!
Plain, to the *Great*, be Truth's *pure Homage* paid.
Malice, Disguise, and Fear, to Courts resign;
Warmth, in *Thy Monarch's Cause*, O *Muse*! be Thine.
Censures, Resentments, Calumnies, and *Hate*,
And all th'*unlasting Levities* of State,
Transient, as Dreams, shall break their Mists away,
And leave him glitt'ring, in unclouded Day.
Feel him, O *Thames*! to thy fam'd Stream, so *nigh*,
Bow thy prone Surge, and glide in Rev'rence by.
Calm, on thy Bank, in *patient Pain*, he *smiles*,
Effus'd, like *Thee*, the Boast of Regal Isles:
Next Neighbour to his GOD! who (*close behind*)
Breathes the *still Altar's* Influence o'er his Mind:

Swells his forgiving Heart with *Joy to bless*;
And bids him *teach* his *Foes* to *shun Distress*.

Pride of a Land, those *Foes* were born to *stain*!

Envy's vast Object! that *o'ercharg'd* a State,
Till *Debt's* proud Blush turn'd *Gratitude* to *Pain*,
And *Wrongs*, and *Distance*, eas'd thy dreaded Weight.

What shall I *say*, Sensations to *reveal*,
Which, Words not reaching, Thought but *aches*, to feel?

All I *can* be, *be Thine*!—Th'Eternal Eye,
That wakes for *Virtue*, sees, and *loves*, thy Claim:

Kingdoms shall rise, and in *slow Ruins* lie,
While new ones, in new Tongues, transmit thy *Name*.

VI.

O, never to be *lost*!—Could *Wishes* save,
Nations would guard Thee from th'all-cov'ring *Grave*:

But, 'twill not be.—Th'impatient Moments fly;

Nations, and *Times*, and *St. John's Self*, must *DIE*.

Die, to his *Friends*;—Himself Fate strikes in vain;

Death but th'*Accession*, of his dateless *Reign*.

When All those sacred Atoms sleep in *Dust*,

If Earth *e'er* veils Thee,—as, too sure! it *must*:

Sons of thy *Soul* shall each dear *Remnant* boast;

And he charm surest, who *retains Thee most*.

Realms, in Thy lucid *Track*, absolv'd from *Night*,

Shall blush for *Blindness*, that *repell'd* such *Light*;

Live to each *Sense*, thy faultless *Taste* inspir'd,

And bless that *Leisure*, which thy *Wrongs* acquir'd.

Freedom's broad *Temple*, in this bright'ning *Isle*,
Pillar'd, on *Props*, by honour'd *St. John* rear'd,

High,

High, on the Front of her enduring Pile,
Shall wear th'*immortal Name*, through Time, rever'd.

Then, shall some happier Bard, all-friended, rise,
Whom ev'ry Muse shall aid, to touch thy Praise:

He, sweetlier-voic'd, shall these low Strains despise,
For *All* thy *tuneful* SOUL shall warm his Lays.
Mean while, O deign, through *death-doom'd Æra's* bright,
Buoyant, to bear aloft *my Speck* of Light;
Then, shall I float sustain'd, in this blest'd Page,
And *one sav'd Poet* 'scape a sinking Age.

VII.

NOW from the swarming *East*, for Sev'n long Years,
Had restless *Midian* pour'd her swarthy Hosts:
And, planting *Canaan* with erected Spears,
Aw'd fainting *Israel*, to her Western Coasts.
To These, old *Amalek* her Standards join'd;
The *marching Hebrews* first, and surest, Foe!
Thick, as the *Locusts*, in some *living Wind*;
A Tide of Death, o'er all the Land, they flow:
Force, and Famine, with them go!
Panglefs, they stain their Front with *Blood*: and blot their Rear with *Woe*.
By God forsaken, God's proud People *fly*;
Valiant, no longer than obedient, found:
Hopeless to live, and yet afraid to die,
In *Caves*, and dark Retreats, they dwell on high.
Thence, prone, look trembling with pale Horror round,
While, from th' expos'd inferior Ground,
Their heavy Harvests load the plund'ring Foe:
And for Support of Those they curse, their Grapes and Olives grow.

Dejected

Dejected now, their *Joshua* they forget,
 Nor longer, warlike, others Lands invade :
 Anxious now, their own they quit,
 Poorly from reachless *Rocks*, to borrow Aid :
 And, hid in Safety's eyeless Dusk, their boasted Glory shade.

VIII.

Westward from rev'rend *Jordan's* silv'ry Stream,
 Where Half the *Manassean* Tribe their measur'd Portion found,
Ophra salutes the Morning's op'ning Beam,
 From the East Brow of an extended Round
 Of high-rais'd, rugged, and imperial Ground.
 Within th'extensive Circle, copious *Plain*,
 And safe-stretch'd *Pastures*, high-inclos'd, remain
 Impreguably secure, beneath th'exterior *Mound*.

Far to the North, below, was *Jezreel's* Valley spread :

Jezreel, by mighty Victories renown'd !

'Twas on this Mountain's broad and fertile Head,

JOASH, the destin'd Hero's Father, dwelt :

Joash, whom home-rais'd Harvests nobly fed ;

Who, old in Ease, no Blast of Care had felt ;

Crown'd with unenvy'd Plenty, and Respect,

He held a Power, by no proud Faction check'd ;

And, sole, and nat'ral Monarch of the Place,

Reign'd in paternal Majesty, o'er all his happy Race.

Hard by his House, a rev'rend Oak there grew,

Which there had flourish'd, many a Cent'ry past ;

Long before *Israel* GOD, or MOSES, knew,

Or from *Egypt's* Chain withdrew,

This Tree a Shade o'er half the Mountain cast.

Stretch'd

Stretch'd on a Bench, beneath th'expansive Gloom,
Gideon, whose struggling Anguish long'd for Vent,
Lay, at the earliest Dawn of doubtful Light,
A far Discerner, unexpos'd to Sight;
On mighty Ends, in Contemplation, bent.

IX.

The Morning rising over *Israel's* Spoils,
Glow'd with a burning Blush, to see her Shame:
The wakeful Bees began their searchful Toils,
And humm'd, from Flow'r to Flow'r, with tasteful Aim.
High to the bright'ning Skies the soaring Lark
Rose, warbling Welcome to the op'ning Day:
Below, with humbler Melody,
Hopping from Bush to Bush, from Tree to Tree,
A Thousand Birds in mirthful Concert play.
Slow from the Plain, the melting Dew,
To kiss the Sunbeams, climbing, rose;
And bore sweet Odours, upward, as it flew,
To guide their balmy Influence from the *Foes*.
Still, some fresh Zephyr fann'd the fragrant Vale;
And still a Thousand mingled Sweets rose with the spicy Gale.
Along the Mountain's steep, but blooming Side,
The creeping Vine, and scentful Myrtle spread:
O'er the Rock's Margin, high, with frightful Pride,
The over-hanging *Palm* the Winds defy'd:
And rais'd, in dang'rous State, its branchy Head.
At the Hill's Foot, with hoarse, and murm'ring Sound,
A winding Riv'let roll'd its pebbly Way,
And, ling'ring thro' th'enamell'd Vale, delighting there to stray,
Late it's loud Passage into *Jordan* found.

Far, on either Side the Brook,
 A rip'ning Harvest bent her golden Head;
 Bow'd, to invite th'expected Reaping-hook:
 And waving wanton, o'er its airy Bed,
 Sadly, at Distance, pleas'd their Sight, whose Taste it should have fed.

X.

All this fair Prospect, with commanding Eye,
 The thought-afflicted *Gideon* saw, from high:
 Happy enough, had this been *all* his View!
 But oh! he saw the *Camp* of *Midian*, too!
 Proudly spread, in warlike Awe,
 Death's whole collected Pomp, at once, he saw.
 A mingled Horror glitter'd from below:
 Tents, green, white, sanguine, azure, distant seen,
 Varied the Landſchape, with a threat'ning *Show*:
 Whence gleamy Swords, and Lances, glow'd between;
 And fill'd, with terrible Delight, the fight-alarming Scene.

Here, and there, high-mettled Steeds
 Bound loose, in wanton Exercise, and neigh along the Meads.
 In other Parts, the *scyth-arm'd Chariots*, driven,
 Wheel, round each other, with elusive Skill,
 Formful of future Schemes to *kill*:
 Swift, ev'ry Way, they wind, at Signals given;
 And open wide, and close again, at Will:
 Their brazen Wheels with Din the Valley fill;
 And shoot their clatt'ring Echoes up the Hill:
 Then, all at once, with yet more thund'ring Noise,
 The tortur'd Drums, and sprightly Trumpets, join'd,
 Proudly proclaim the waking Conqu'ror's Joys;
 And swell their savage Triumph up the Wind.

XI.

XI.

Light, from his Bench, enrag'd, young *Gideon* leapt,
 By Doubt, and Shame, and Grief, and Anger, press'd :
 GOD, who till now, he cry'd, his Promise *kept*,
 Leaves us abandon'd most, when most distress'd !
Why, thou immortal Leader of our Race,
 Why were thy Blessings heap'd upon this Land ?
 The *Milk* and *Honey* of thy promis'd Grace
 Flow'd ev'ry-where, throughout each charming Space ;
 But, oh ! they flow'd to our Destroyer's Hand.
 And *must* it *be* ? and can *no Help* be found ?
 Said I, no Help ? — Dishonest Sound !
 There can, there must, there *shall*. — This galling Yoke,
 Which haughty *Midian* will not ease,
 May — when GOD and *Israel* please,
 From off our Necks, at one determin'd Stroke,
 Be shook, in Fury ; or, by Strength, be broke.
 But *who*, alas ! what Hand shall guide the Blow ?
 Heartless, our Tribes indulge their patient Woe ;
 Half, with Treach'ry, *aid* the *Foe* :
 And, false to Heaven and Us, th' Invader *own* :
 The other Half, who hold their Country dear,
 Doubting GOD's Help, because 'tis slowly shown,
 With well for Conscience, and submit for Fear.
 Now were some *single Power* a general Bliss :
 What wanted *Israel*, when possess'd of *This* ?
 The Kings about us, with uncurb'd Command,
 Timely directing, save their Land :
 We too, once prosper'd in a *Monarch's* Hand.

Now, misaspiring to be loosely great,
 Disjunctive Freedom but enslaves our State.
 In Governments, where All would *rule*,---and None, by Choice, obey,
 Not soon, indeed, the self-disturbing Storm
 Yields to subside beneath a *Tyrant Sway* :
 But Power, so parcell'd, melts, in Broils, away ;
 And noisy Contest, weak'ning *Awe*, must gen'ral Strength betray.
 Is there a Man throughout all *Israel's* Names,
 Who dares not, Hand to Hand, assault a Foe ?
Singly, All are free, and brave ;
Together, but one Coward, and one Slave !
 Since, all-excentric, each the rest disclaims,
 Why look we wide, th'apparent Cause to know ?
 We, to *defective Rule*, our Mis'ries owe.
 Led by a *Lion*, Sheep, like Lions, dare :
 And Lions, led by *Sheep*, like Sheep, despair.
 He spoke ; and with a swift, and manly Stride,
 Approach'd the Mountain's steepy Side :
 Sternly, on *Midian*, downward bent his Eyes,
 Glow'd, as he gazing felt new Passions rise :
 And roll'd 'em sparkling, to th'upbraided Skies.
 High beat his warm, and wish-disorder'd Heart,
 And his hot Bosom tingled with the Smart.

XII.

While thus in busy Silence, fix'd, he gaz'd,
 Th'unfolding Heav'ns with streamy Brightness blaz'd.
 Panting, his tongueless Terror *would* have spoke —
 But, as he view'd th'effulgent Chasm, amaz'd,
 Close, at his Ear, a bursting Thunder broke :

And

And a Voice reach'd him, from th'abandon'd Oak.
 He turn'd, and in his late-left Station saw,
 Calmly reclin'd, a Youth divinely fair,
 Sitting, like some familiar Friend, some Partner of his Care.
 Pensive, he lean'd his Head on his Left-hand,
 His smiling Eye shed Sweetness, mix'd with Awe :
 His Right-hand, with a milk-white Wand, some Figure seem'd to draw.
 A nameless Grace was scatter'd thro' his Air :
 And, o'er his Shoulders, loosely flow'd his amber-colour'd Hair.
 As *Gideon*, wond'ring, tow'rd the Stranger drew,
 Th'immortal Visitor approach'd *Him*, too.
 Hail, happy Youth, he cry'd !—God's *Chosen*, hail !
 Thou Light of *Israel* ! her commission'd *Guide* !
 Soon shall *thy Sword* o'er yon gay Power prevail :
 Hope boldly.—God will war on *Gideon's Side*.

XIII.

Whoe'er thou art, the Hero, sad, reply'd,
 Who know'st so well th'unhappy *Gideon's Name* ;
 Would thou couldst tell, since GOD is on my Side,
 How comes it, he permits my Country's Shame ?
 Where is the *saving Rod* of *Moses*, now ?
 Where the lost Force of *Joshua's* warlike Hand ?
 Where the *flash'd Flame* from night-hid *Sinai's* Brow ?
 Oh ! for that foe-preventing *Cloud*, by Day !
 Or, by Night, that *fiery Ray*,
 Which led our Fathers to this happy Land !
 What need of all this *Waste* of *Wonders* done,
 If, here, scarce seated, we must fall at last ?

Why,

Why, out of *Pharaoh's* Grasp was *Israel* won?
 Why the *Red Sea*, miraculously, past?
 Sure! since our Lot's for *Ruin* cast,
 More nobly wretched 'twould appear,
 To be, in *Egypt*, *Slaves*, than *here*!
 Why, now forsaking, was he pleas'd to *chuse*?
 Why call us *His*, at *first*?
 Never to have been blest, were lightlier curst.
 Hopes, from false Prospect, cruelly amuse:
 Better ne'er know a Bliss, than, known, to *lose*!
 As for myself, fain would I credit All:
 Long have I dar'd revolve proud *Midian's* Fall.
 But, void of Means to suit th'ambitious Aim,
 The Curb of Fortune keeps my Courage tame.
 Of all our Tribe, the poorest Race is mine;
 And of that poorest Race, the meanest I:
 Be it suppos'd I should incline
 War's dreadful Weight to try;
 Where is my *Pow'r*, my *Interest*, my *Fame*?
 Will *Israel's* haughty Tribes be led, by one without a *Name*?

XIV.

The Angel interrupting here, thus awfully reply'd,
Israel, bold *Hebrew*, has her God *defy'd*.
 Since from affronted Heav'n th'ungrateful Race
 Hope lost Assistance, and would still prevail,
 Why have they broke God's Laws, renounc'd his Grace,
 And poorly bow'd to *Ashtaroth*, and *Baal*?
 Were *These* the Gods, who from th'*Egyptian* Land,
 Freed your lost Fathers, with unhop'd Success?

'Twixt *wave-built Walls* conducted 'em, to *Idumæa's Strand*?
 Safe steer'd you thro' the pathless *Wilderness*,
 Gave awful Pow'r to the *Mosaic Wand*,
 All proud Attempts from hostile *Earth* to check,
 And govern *Heav'n*, by its commission'd Beck?
 With *liquid Rock* to stream a springless Land,
 Call *manna'd Harvests* from th' unfruitful Sand,
 And save, and bless you, with a mighty Hand?
 Since, stubborn, for an empty *Idol's* sake,
 Your Articles with *Heav'n* you dar'd to break,
 What vain Presumption bids you judge it fit,
 Who slight the *Bond*, should reap the *Benefit*?
 But thou would'st say, Repentance dawns, at last;
 That, sadly conscious of their Error past;
 Groaning, in Anguish of their Souls, their Eyes to *Heav'n* they cast.
 How small th' Atonement, and how great the Sin!
 Yet, it suffices, that they, *late*, begin
 To *quit* th' ungrateful Paths, they've wander'd in:
 Unutterably gracious, *God* disdains
 To feel a Pleasure, in his Creatures Pains.
 Men, who slight *Heav'n*, but their *own Bliss* forsake:
 I, the *Great Pard'ner's* Minister, am sent,
 To arm Thee, *Gideon*, for thy brave Intent.
 Boldly resolve; and safely undertake.
 Hail, *Heav'n's* illustrious Instrument!
 Thine be the Ends, on which thy Thoughts were bent.

XV.

Gideon sigh'd sad, and graceful bow'd his Head;
 Heedful, to question, ere he yet believ'd
 So strange a Message, tho' from Heaven receiv'd.

The deep-discerning *Nuncio* plainly read
Each Scruple, in his arguing Fancy bred:

Let me, said he, from yon forsaken Seat,
Share that small Store, thy Grief neglects to *eat*.

Gideon, with joyful Diligence obey'd,
And humbly, at his Feet, the Napkin spread;

And, in neat Order, hospitably laid
His little Treat of *Wine*, and *Flesh*, and *Bread*:

Yet, doubtful, and amaz'd, at what he did,
My Lord, said he, who Heav'n's high Will reveals,

Stoops not, I fear, to taste of *mortal Meals*:
The Food of *Angels* is not *Flesh* of *Kid*.

XVI.

Be taught, reply'd th'*unbody'd* Guest, from this Consent, to know,
Men, to *Heav'n's Myst'ries*, Faith implicit, owe.

Let the Command suffice, nor Reason's Eye,
With dang'rous Keeness, seek the darken'd *Why*.

Where God has said, *I'll have it so*,
All curious Inquisition must be spar'd:
And nothing sought, beyond what stands *declar'd*.

Be not, in human Ignorance, too scrupulously wise:
But mindful, that *obedient Faith* is Man's *best Sacrifice*.

He said: and, gently stretching out his Hand,
Touch'd the spread Napkin with his snowy Wand.

As, from hot Furnaces, the vap'ry Stream
Mounts thick, and widens its evolving Steam,
So, when the Angel his Reproof had spoke,
At the watch'd Summons of the Wand's soft Stroke,
A springy *Flame* from the dry Surface broke,

And

And cover'd, and consum'd, th'untasted Store.
 Lovely the Fire rose whirling, mix'd with Smoke,
 Folding, in glorious Volumes, o'er and o'er :
 And upward, on a curling Cloud, the mounted Angel bore.
Gideon look'd after him, and would have spoke ;
 While, ravish'd with the fierce Delight, he saw him gently *soar* :
 Till forc'd to give the th'outlength'ning Prospect o'er,
 His Eyes, in wat'ry Brightness *wept*, for Bliss, they found no more.

XVII.

Musing a while, and dumb with deep Suspense,
 Thus loud, at last, his Wonder broke its Way.
 Immortal GOD! whose Glory's high Defence
 Thy own Almighty Hand can best display ;
 Thy Hand, beneath whose angry *Touch*, whole Worlds would melt away !
 Can it be *possible* ! to one, like *me* !
 Without *Desert*, of no *Degree*,
 It should be left, to draw the Sword for THEE !
 But dark, and wond'rous, ever, were thy Ways :
 All different Means grow *equal* in *thy* Hand ;
 And *all* Things *possible*, where Man obeys
 His *Maker's* high Command.
 Why *weigh* I, thus, Decrees, I must *fulfil* ?
 'Twas holy Flame, I find, that did inspire
 My Soul's ungovernable Fire ;
 And That was *working Providence*, which seem'd but *wild Desire*.
 Hence, then, with Apprehensions, and Delays ;
 Hence, with all doubted Want of human Skill.
 GOD, if he meant me for his Praise,
 Will mould me to his Will.

XVIII.

While he yet spoke, from *Ophra's* neighb'ring Walls,
A winding Horn, in short and sudden Calls,
Invades his Ear, with high, and hoarse Alarms:
And, from the Town, a mingled Tumult swarms
Of every Rank, all Ages, weak, and strong:
Flowing, in Tides of Uproar, thick along:
Confus'dly arm'd, and more confus'dly led,
They seem'd, with eager Threat'nings, to pursue
A Party, which, along the Mountain's Side,
In more Disorder fled.

Gideon, in Haste, to his near House withdrew:
There, with a Spear, his warlike Hand supply'd;
And join'd th'egressive Croud, and follow'd, too.

XIX.

This was a Party, that, from *Midian's* Camp,
Had, in the cov'ring Dusk of Night, been sent,
To climb the Mountain, silent, and unspy'd,
And, close conceal'd till Dawn, with dire Intent,
'Twixt the Cragg's bushy Clefs their Cohort hide:
Till, at the op'ning Portal, rushing in,
Surprize might force, what *Siege*, would, *slowly*, win.
But *Joash*, early rising, every Day,
Took Pleasure to behold the Morning break;
To watch the first faint Shoots of Twilight play:
And Night's dissolving Shades melt soft away.
He, while his fragrant Walk he meant to take,
Round the known Borders of his well-till'd Farm,
Undreaming Danger, as unmeaning Harm,

Down the Hill's Brow discern'd the Points of Spears,
 Suspiciously in sloping Covert bent ;
 And saw the sheltry Bushes *shake*, along the green Descent.
 His taught Experience catch'd prophetic Fears :
 Swift to the Town convey'd this strong Alarm ;
 And rous'd th'unwary Multitude, to *arm*.

XX.

Prevented, the discover'd Ambush rose,
 And fast retreated down the craggy Hill :
Gideon, whose Breast pre-destin'd Honours fill,
 Doubly inspir'd, in Presence of his Foes,
 Wing'd his swift Feet with Heav'n's remember'd Will ;
 And, now nigh-reaching, gain'd upon 'em, still.
Oreb, a *Midian* Prince, of warlike Fame,
 Who led this Party on their close Design,
 Saw their Retreat, with mingled Rage, and Shame,
 And labour'd, earnestly, and long, to stop their headlong Flight :
 But neither Prayers, nor Blows, could now incline
 His scatt'ring Files, to bear the *Hebrew's* Sight.
 Mov'd therefore by a brave and princely Mind,
 He let the rushing Numbers pass him by ;
 Then, following, march'd securely slow, behind :
 Oft *facing*, with a fierce, and flameful Eye ;
 Himself an Army, while his People fly !
He, when he found his Rear too closely prest,
 Turn'd sudden, in a steep, and winding Way,
 Where scarce two meeting Friends could pass, abreast,
 Such threddy Concave, here, deep-narrowing lay :
 And jutting *Rocks*, and frightful *Steeps*, hung horrid o'er the rest.

Since, like a tim'rous Herd, said he, yon Cowards haste away,
 Nor blush, in *Arms*, their Sov'reign to betray,
 Let 'em enjoy their Safety, as they *may* ;
 'Tis now *their* Shame, who dare their Charge reject ;
 'Twere *mine*, should I the Negligent neglect :
 'Tis a King's glorious Business, to *protect*.

XXI.

He said, and o'er an Angle of the Path,
 Observ'd a *tott'ring Cliff*, which loosely hung,
 Broke by long-drenching Rains, and wint'ry Wrath,
 Acutely pendent, 'twixt two Rock's rais'd Ends,
 Pond'rous it seems to *arch* the Road, and a *roof'd Shadow* lends.
 High, to one pointed Prop, the Prince ascends ;
 Long, to the vast unweildy Weight, with struggling Labour clung :
 And *down*, at last, *across* the *Path*, the loady Barrier flung.
Gideon, who just approach'd it, as it fell,
 Strides back, amaz'd, and scarce believes his Sight :
 Whoe'er thou art, he cry'd, thou tim'ft it well :
 And sure ! to do thy envy'd Courage Right,
 He, who so bravely *flies*, would nobly *fight*.

XXII.

Scarce had he spoke, when with a threat'ning Spear,
 Down, on the bulwark Rock, Prince *Oreb* leapt.
Hebrew, he cry'd, thou art not safe, so near :
 Retire : This Pass will be too strongly kept.
 Speaking, aloft he shook his death-arm'd Lance,
 And to the shouting Thousands turn'd his Shield :
 The slow-descending Foes, now, scarce advance ;

But,

But, from th'o'ercrowded Steep, in spiral Line,
Aw'd, and astonish'd, at the fierce Design,
Stand *gazing* at the Wonder, they beheld.
Dreadfully bright, his gilded Armour shone;
O'er his left Thigh, a crooked Sword declin'd:
A feath'ry Plume high from his Helmet rose,
And, loofely gay, wav'd warlike, in the Wind:
Crimson, with Sable mix'd, half-shaded, flows,
Severely charming, to his distant Foes!
Of all the Prefs, *Gideon* alone comes on:
The rest, in safe Defiance, threat, behind;
Ignobly hurl their Jav'lins down in vain,
Which, clatt'ring on his Shield, rebound; and tremble, back, again.

XXIII.

Gideon, awhile, revolv'd th'unequal War,
And blush'd to see it basely wag'd from far:
Then, rais'd his Arm, in Sign, that He, alone,
Would make the gen'ral Hazard, all, his own.
Hush'd was the Storm: and *Oreb*, smiling, saw
One threat'ning *Hebrew* near him draw.
Yet, cautious, to prevent too bold Advance,
Aimful he poiz'd, and hurl'd, his beamy Lance:
Timely th'Approacher bow'd his watchful Head,
And harmless let the pointed Tempest fly;
But his reach'd *Station* felt th'Invader nigh:
Deep, in the clifty *Path*, it Entrance found,
And, echoing its Design, with thundring Sound,
Jarr'd upward, as it stood erect, and *quiver'd* in the Ground.

Gideon sprung near, and from beneath the Rock,
 Rising, at Hand, directs a speary Blow :
 The ringing Target yielded to the Shock,
 And the broad-ent'ring Steel broke thund'ring through.
 Half his bright *Sword*, the dreadful *Oreb* drew :
 When *Fortune* — blind Invertreſs of Event !
 Thus check'd th' impatient Speed his Ardour lent ;
 Gideon strongly, from below,
 Dragg'd hard, to diſengage th'intangled Spear,
 Which, while Prince *Oreb's* Shield retentive bound,
 Lightly th'Affaulter, leaping from the Ground,
 Help'd by the Staff's Reſiſtance, firmly graſp'd,
 Reach'd the gain'd Rock, ſurpriz'd the Foe, and his arm'd Body clasp'd.
 To Heav'n a thund'ring Shout the *Hebrews* rais'd,
 Struck, and aſtoniſh'd ! and tranſported, gaz'd.
 Far flies th'incumber'd Shield, wide hurl'd away ;
 Lab'ring, each ſtrives the other's Weight to lift :
 Now, *curvy Grapplings* every *Bend*, aſſay.
 Now, with a ſpringy *Force*, in Starts of Rage,
 From finewy Curb, their Joints they *diſengage* :
 Soon *clos'd again*, with ſtormy Graſp they *meet*,
 Arms fett'ring Arms, and Feet perplexing Feet :
 Eluſive long, with new, and wily Drifts,
 From Side to Side, th'evasive Whirlwind ſhifts ;
 They heave, they drag, they twiſt, bend, lift, and ſtrain :
 And tire each practis'd Nerve, yet toil in vain.
 Fiercely, at length, *provok'd*, at Art's Delay,
 Born for *plain Conqueſt*, and the Glare of *Day* !
 Strength's utmoſt Effort, in *one* Proof, to make,
 With Feet firm fix'd, and ſtretch'd-out Arms, the Rock's looſe Cleſts they *ſhake*.

Sudden, they feel their Prop's false Fabric *break* :
Time-worn, the flaky Pediment's press'd *Slate*,
Splitting beneath the human Tempest's Weight,
Roll'd one huge Fragment *down*, while one vast Flake,
Backward reclining, now scarce choak'd the Streight :
Distant, compell'd, th'unclosing Warriors fall,
And the freed Path unbars her Track, to All.

XXIV.

Gideon, awhile, long stunn'd, *above* : — *Oreb*, who *downward* fell,
Roll'd Sev'n steep Paces, ere his Feet he gain'd :
But, swift recov'ring, with indignant Swell,
Look'd back, and saw, surpriz'd, that this dire Chance,
Bursting the Pass, he had so long maintain'd,
Had left it open to his Foes Advance.
Then, hopeful, hard Pursuit would now prove vain,
Should the Persisters press his flying Train ;
Swift, as a Tyger bounds, he leaps away,
Light, and regardless, where best Passage lay :
Till near behind him came th'o'ertaking *Shout*.
Then, paus'd he, calm, look'd heedfully about :
Mark'd in the Mountain's Side, a dusky *Cave* ;
And enters there, with slow Suspense, his future Hope to save.

XXV.

As rapid Currents, choak'd by float-mix'd *Mud*,
Check'd for a Moment, smooth their troubled Flood ;
Then, sluicing on, to clear th' obstructed Way,
With tenfold Force renew their sweepy Sway :
So when the *Hebrews* saw the Passage free,

In headlong *Cat'raet*, down the Steep they *gush'd* ;
And, in rude Flow, fast by the Cavern rush'd.
Nor dreamt, that *Oreb* could so near 'em be.
To the Hill's outmost Verge, at last, they came,
Where a broad Terras, form'd by Nature, spread,
And, round the Mountain, rear'd a penfile *Plain*.
Hither, by vain Pursuit, the *Hebrews*, led,
Beheld th'escaping Foe the Valley gain,
And safely, there, in rallying Line, make Head.
Thence, at more Distance, cross the forded Stream,
Squadrons, from *Midian's* Camp detach'd, they view'd ;
Whose sun-struck Weapons flash'd a threat'ning Gleam.
Then, *Gideon* found it prudent to retreat,
And, timely wise, recomb'd the steep Ascent ;
But, marching slowly, with attentive Feet,
Examin'd ev'ry Cavern, as he went :
From that, in which Prince *Oreb* lay, sudden an ent'ring File,
With Eyes cast backward, trembling, outward flew :
Close at their Heels came dreadful *Oreb*, too ;
By Nature, always eager to *pursue* !
But, soon as *Gideon* he beheld, and knew,
He sheath'd his Sword, and with a graceful Smile,
Now *first*, said he, this Sword, *in vain*, I drew.
But, forc'd to yield, 'tis best I yield to *you*.
The gen'rous *Hebrew*, bowing mild, reply'd ;
Fortune not always favours the most brave :
Had partial Vict'ry still sustain'd *your* Side,
She would have robb'd me of wish'd Pow'r to *save*.
And you had wrong'd a *Hebrew Heart*, untry'd.

XXVI.

While they were speaking, and the should'ring Croud,
Morosely insolent, and rudely loud,
Was climbing round, all gaping for a View,
As if the Conquest claim'd the *Insult*, too!

A second Chance diverts th' impatient Throng;
For some, who newly search'd the Cavern, round,
Noiseful return'd, and with 'em dragg'd along,
Ten weeping *Slaves*, whom, there, conceal'd they found:
Poor Fugitives of antient *Canaan's* Race,
Once happy Owners of that promis'd Land,
Where, forc'd to give th' invading *Hebrews* Place,
They, now, liv'd subject to *their* harsh Command.
Severely us'd, and tir'd with Length of Woe,
The new-found Ten had from their Masters run:
Drawn by the Nearness of the *gen'ral* Foe,
To meditate Escape, and Slav'ry shun.
They might, perhaps, with *Midian* join'd, be free;
Worse than they were, they knew, they *could not be*:
And there's a kind of mournful *Ease*, in *Change* of *Misery*.

XXVII.

When, to the Town, the noisy Press
Return'd with *Shouts*, their Triumph to express;
Shouts, the *Voice* of proud Success!
Th' *assembled Elders*, o'er the City Gate,
Sat, wisely busy'd, in ferene Debate,
On Questions, which concern'd the Good, of *Ophra's* little State.

Sev'n was their Number ; and they chose to fit
 In a bow'd *Crescent's* Form, whose *Points* were fill'd
 By Two of *Levi's* sacred Sons——best skill'd
 To judge of Laws in rev'rend Myst'ry writ :
 Sage, in the *Centre*, hoary *Joash* sat,
 Renown'd for Virtue, and rever'd for Age :
 Th'affisting *Four* were Men of Years and Skill,
 Fam'd, Themselves, for shunning *Ill* :
 And, therefore, thought best qualify'd, to govern Other's Will.
 To These, the Croud their Ten Deserters bring,
 And tell where found, and on what Errand bent :
 To These they also shew the *captive King* :
 But, loud, in ev'ry list'ning Ear, they *Gideon's* Praises ring.
 Paint *how* he dar'd ; *act o'er* th'admir'd Event :
 And mock Prince *Oreb's* brave Resolve, to stop their fierce Descent.

XXVIII.

Slow rose *Eliakim*, the Town's High Priest ;
 The ruling *Levite*, and the Senate's Tongue :
 A Man, who dar'd, in Zeal to Heav'n, bewail
 Religion *lost*, and *Hebrew* Fame *decreas'd* :
 He well remember'd, while he yet was young,
 How GOD enabled *Israel* to prevail :
 And sigh'd, to see th'ungrateful People fail,
 Nor ever bow'd the Knee, Himself, to *Ashtaroth*, or *Baal*.
 Bless'd be our *Father's* GOD, said he, this Day !
 To whom, All owing, we would nothing pay !
Gideon! methinks, I feel thy Father's Joy.
 O ! may thy blooming Glory never fade !
 No Envy, sure ! will budding Virtue shade :

Soon

Soon does thy Country's Love thy Sword employ !
The *Prince*, Thy Captive, by the Right of War,
Dispose of, at thy safe Discretion's Choice :
And, since all *Ophra's* Sons thy Debtors are,
Accept our Thanks, as from the *gen'ral Voice*.
Dare on ; fight : prosper ! Heav'n shall bless thy Aim ;
This, but the Dawning of thy destin'd Fame !
For *You* — and then he turn'd to *Canaan's* trembling Sons,
Known Custom points us to your mournful Lot :
Since ev'ry Slave, who from his Master runs,
Dies—guilty of an *added* Crime, or not.
He spoke : and, bending toward the bord'ring Seats,
Ask'd, if their Judgment full Concurrence lent ;
And then, distinctly, his *Decree repeats* ;
And all the *Elders* rose, at once, to testify Consent.

XXIX.

Gideon, whose fearless Heart was form'd to *feel*,
Sharer, in ev'ry Woe he could not heal !
Sigh'd, pitying the poor Slave's *prevented* Flight :
And, bowing graceful, spoke in Sorrow's Right.
Who, rev'rend Fathers ! after This, will pause, in Honour's Chace,
The Prize so glorious, and so short the Race !
Too much you pay me, for too little won.
If, but to act our *Duty* claims such Praise,
For what, alas ! has *Gideon*, further, done ?
We live, I fear, in unperforming Days.
But your too kind Applause, perhaps, would raise
A *future* Worth, by previous Praise.

Sev'n was their Number; and they chose to fit
 In a bow'd *Crescent's* Form, whose *Points* were fill'd
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Too much you pay me, for too little won.
If, but to act our *Duty* claims such Praise,
For what, alas ! has *Gideon*, further, done ?
We live, I fear, in unperforming Days.
But your too kind Applause, perhaps, would raise
A *future* Worth, by previous Praise.

If, wisely gen'rous, you incline
 To make that grateful Lesson *mine*.
 Consenting *Will* holds modest Purpose dumb :
 And humbly takes your *present Thanks*, for *Actions*, yet, to *come*.
 One Cause, mean while, *not mine*, I fain would plead ;
 I cannot wish to see the *Wretched bleed* :
 Who knows, what Hardships, in their friendless State,
 Had gall'd their patient Hearts, ere yet they *fled* ?
 But grant *Them* guilty — Law *mistakes* their Fate.
 Death, in the *Happy*, may create some *Dread* :
 But the cold Grave is Mis'ry's restful *Bed*.
 There are Oppressions, of such monstrous Weight,
 That 'twere the happiest Freedom, to be *dead*.
 Such, if their Wrongs, we *lose* our stern Intent ;
 And give 'em Ease from Pain—for *Punishment* !
 Judge not, I pray you, that I mis-presume,
 Or pride myself to think, you Favours owe,
 If, loving Mercy, I deplore their Doom.
 Bring home an alien Danger, THEN, *appeal* :
 Make the Case *yours* : and *sentence*, as you *feel*.
Israel Herself was, once, a *Slave* :
 Grant, Heav'n, if ever she, again, be so,
 She finds a *Moses*, or a *GOD*,—to save !
 If, then, our Fathers found it *hard*, the Yoke to undergo,
 And having, once, been unoppress'd, and free,
 Thought it their *Glory*, and their *Right*—to fly from Slavery ;
 Instruct me, rev'rend Rulers! *why* These Men,
 Now, in the Case, that was *all Israel's*, then,
 Should merit *Death*, for counting, in their Claim,
 That noble *Thirst of Liberty*, that, first, gave *Israel FAME*.

XXX.

He paus'd :—Approving *Joash* smil'd with Pride,
 And heard, with kindred Joy, his Offspring *blest*.
Eliakim, with weak, but willing Stride,
 And Hands uplifted (Sign of Zeal express'd!)
 Came forward, and to blushing *Gideon*, cry'd,
 Close let me press Thee to my hope-warm'd Breast.
 No narrow Bounds of Custom, Int'rest, Will,
 Shall e'er confine the Reach of *Gideon's* Soul.
 A Mind so spacious, and so stretch'd a Skill,
 Were, sure! design'd by Heav'n for *wide Controul*!
 O! take the *pardon'd Slaves*, thy Mercy's Prize:
 Thou plead'st too *justly*, to be heard *in vain*.
 Henceforth, their Fate, in thy own Bosom, lies;
 Bless'd in thy Service, the sav'd Ten retain:
What, happier can they wish?—*How*, happier *be*?
 Thou gav'st 'em Life: and they shall live *for Thee*.

XXXI.

Th'Assembly rose: and the Remains of Day
 Were, in triumphant Pastime, *nois'd* away:
 At length, still Night her solemn Influence shed,
 And dew-drench'd Sable wrapt the Mountain's Head:
 Sleep's heavy Drag the Rage of Joy depress'd,
 And weary Tumult hush'd herself to Rest.
 But *Gideon's* active Mind was fram'd to *wake*:
 His new-gain'd Honour, and the Angel's *Hail*,
 Suffer'd *Him* no Rest to take:
 But led him, pensive, o'er the Grounds, thro' Night's *opaquest* Veil.

So, wand'ring wide, he reach'd the Grove of *Baal*.

Westward, upon the Mountain's Edge, it stood,
Where, shap'd by Art, a huge round *Hill*, in *terrac'd Stages* rose;
Whose far-seen *Pyramid*, *Five Plains* compose:

And ev'ry Stage was a small, sep'rate, Wood.
The lowermost, planted thick, with baleful *Eugh*,
Could, with brown Horror, quench the Glare of Noon:
But now, from Night, a deeper Dusk it drew.

The fun'ral *Cypress* the next Stage o'erspread;
The Third, which, narrowing, upward, wanted Room
For Trees of copious, and untonfile Head,
From deep-ting'd *Laurel* caught umbrageous Gloom.

Round the Fourth Platform, climbing *Ivy* crept,
And into bushy Shade high-arching grew:

There, in dark-tufted Roofs, black Ravens slept;
And *inbred Owls*, which never Daylight knew.

Flat, like a *tabled Plain*, the last high Stage
Nourish'd *one* tow'ring *Oak*, which strongly stood,

The time-swoln Growth of many a perish'd Age:
And bore, on one proud Trunk, a spacious *Wood*.

Down, o'er the shadow'd Groves, above, th'enormous Branches hung,
And form'd a sheltry Arbour, round the *Bole*:

Mov'd, by the Wind, with murm'ring Sweep they swung,
And blew cool Horror over *Gideon's Soul*.

From Stage to Stage, broad Steps, of half-hid Stone,
With curling *Moss*, and blady Grass, o'ergrown,

Led to the Top, where reign'd this Monarch Oak.

'Twixt the black Boughs, hung, melancholy, down,

One glimm'ring Lamp, dull'd by its own thick Smoke:
Which, feebly, thro' a Lantern's Sides, the bord'ring Darkness broke.

XXXII.

By the pale Radiance, faintly, scatter'd round,
Full in the Centre of this awful Shade,
Gideon, the Idol of the Grove survey'd.
O'er a round Altar, by green Foliage bound,
A wooden Sculpture bore the *Sun's* broad Face :
Hideously *kind*, in Act of purpos'd Grace ;
Stretching thin Arms, across th' o'ershadow'd Space,
It gleam'd an added Horror round the Place.
Speechless, a while, 'twixt mingled Grief, and Shame,
This Pageantry of Godhead he beheld :
At length, revoic'd, by his remember'd *Aim*,
How long, said he, shall *Idol Faith* prevail ?
How long, th' *Eternal's* Priests bow down to *Baal* ?
And Stones, and Blocks, usurp th' Almighty's Name ?
All-pard'ning Heav'n ! I feel thy Wrongs *inspire* :
Burn we this *Dæmon*, in his own dim Fire.
Where can we better *Virtue's* Race begin,
Than at th' eradicated *Shoot* of *Sin* ?

XXXIII.

So saying, o'er the dusky Paths, he, back, explor'd his Way,
And, silent, to an outbuilt Hovel came,
Where, in safe Sleep, his new-gain'd Servants lay.
They wake, and hear him, and mistake his Aim :
Strain their stretch'd Eyes, and, trembling, ask his *Name*.
Be hush'd, he answer'd, and dismiss your Fear,
Only your *Patron's* Voice, you hear.

Rise,

Rise, and assist him, in a just Design ;
Or no way dang'rous, or the Danger *mine*.

For *You* — This done, I set you free,
Fear not to trust your late-given Lives with *Me*.
Be grateful: 'twill adorn your Liberty.

Uprush the summon'd Ten, with glad Consent,
Nor weigh, nor question, his Intent :
Enough for *Them*, that 'tis, by *Gideon*, meant.

From a rough Store of rustic Instruments,
Which next that Hovel, opportunely, lay,
To ev'ry Hand a shining Axe he gave,

Bad 'em be resolute, and brave :
And, cautious, march'd, in silent Speed, away.

In a fair Pasture, bord'ring on their Road,
A milk-white *Ox*, in fragrant Plenty, graz'd :

Unbroken yet, and alien to the *Goad*,
Chief, of a chosen Breed by *Joash* rais'd.

Him, first, they seize, and having bound him strong,
Drag him, hard-struggling, and displeas'd, along.

XXXIV.

Instructively inform'd, as *on* they went,
Hast'ning, and prompt, they reach th'unhallow'd Grove :

There, to a Tree, th'unwilling Victim tie ;

Then, on the pious Mischief warmly bent,

Each, with contending Emulation strove,

Laborious, in Obedience, to *outvye*.

First, *Baal's* polluted Altar down they threw,

And scatter'd wide the Fragments, ev'ry Way :

Next,

Next, from disjointed Steps, with Toil, they drew
 The massy Stones ; which, in loose Pile, they lay,
 A purer Altar, of new Frame, to raise :
 Sacred to a diviner Pow'r, and more exalted Praise.
 Now, to the Idol Form, approaching nigh,
 Gideon his Sword, in zealous Transport, drew ;
 Witness, he cry'd, *sole God!* who hear'st from *high*,
 Witness the *Vengeance*, from thy Servants due !
Thou, Baal! assert thy *Pow'r*, and 'scape thy *Shame* :
 Strike, if thou can'st : I, thus, thy *Cause* disclaim.
 Speaking, he cleav'd the Image, at a Blow,
 On either Side, the parted Godhead fell :
 Winds, o'er the Grove, shrill-shrieking Echoes blow,
 And all the *Dæmons* of the Place, groan'd helpless from below.
 Encourag'd by their Lord, the shaking Train,
 To smaller Pieces, hew the *chippy God* :
 Atoning Fire the dreary Spoils maintain,
 And the dim Lamp no longer gleam'd in vain.
 Then, at th'attentive Leader's waited Nod,
 Up the Grove's Edge, the back'ning Ox they strain.

XXXV.

The mounting Fire, now, blaz'd in tow'ry Pride,
 When a fair Bowl, by *Gideon's* Hand, in previous Care, supply'd,
 Apt for Libation, Aid of Sacrifice,
 High-filling,—He, upon the hissing Flame,
 Pour'd the warm Blood, and prostrate bow'd, to pray ;
 Not these imperfect Rites, said he, Lord of the *Heart!* despise :
 Call 'em *Ablution*, and let *Israel's* Shame
 Be, from this Time, for ever wash'd away !

He said ; when, strait, confirming *Thunder* roar'd,
 And cross whole Heav'n, with loud Enlargement, roll'd :
 Sudden, the dazzling Gates of Light unfold,
 And, while the kneeling Hero Grace implor'd,
 Show'rs of *thin Lustre* quiver'd thro' the Trees :
 The living Lights from ev'ry Quarter play ;
 And the Grove radiates into flashing *Day*.
 A while the Blaze hung o'er ; but, by Degrees,
 Rose gently : and, in Distance, flow'd away.
 Flat, the Slaves, astonish'd, fell,
 And, drown'd in the refulgent Torrent lay ;
 With awe-mix'd Pleasure felt their Bosoms swell :
 And, as th' ascending Glow unseal'd their Eyes,
 Trembling, gaz'd after it, to see it rise,
 And, wid'ning upward, more and more, in soft'ning Shades decay.

XXXVI.

Recov'ring, each on other, wild they glare :
 Then, humbly, to their honour'd Patron, kneel :
 Words tho' they want their Meaning to declare,
 They more want Coldness to forbear :
 For Joys, by Transport, will themselves reveal.
Phurah, best taught, of these devoted Men,
 At length, found Voice, for the collective *Ten*.
 Bless'd be the G O D of this brave *Hebrew* Race !
 Fall our *false Gods* before his dreadful Face !
 Never could *Baal* thus vindicate his Name ;
 Thus speak, in Thunder, and appear in Flame !
 O, glorious Mortal, thus, by Heav'n approv'd !
 Leave us not *wretched*, to be blindly free ;

Since

Since by the Great Almighty thus belov'd,
 'Twere to be *lost*, to be disjoin'd from *Thee* :
 And to serve *Gideon*, and his GOD, is noblest Liberty.
 He said : and all his Fellows join'd his Pray'r,
 And begg'd, with pious Tears, permitted Stay :
 The gen'rous *Hebrew* found 'em worth his Care :
 If you *will* still be mine, said he, you *may*.
 Nor shall you suffer by the Lot, you chuse ;
 Whom GOD invites, *Man* ought not to refuse.
 But let us, now, my new-made Friends, proceed,
 And finish well the Work, we well began.
 So speaking, round th'enormous Oak, he ran ;
 And, by the Fire's pale Cast, yet glimm'ring wide,
 Saw, from that Quarter, which oppos'd the *West*,
 That, there, the Boughs o'erhung the Mountain's Side,
 Against whose Edge the grovy Summit prest.

XXXVII.

Once more, his broad well-temper'd Blade he drew,
 And gash'd, with all his Strength, the knotty Tree :
 Then, steely Axes following, Two by Two,
 Relieving apt, a long, alternate Toil,
 Lab'ring with fruitless Pain, they wond'ring see,
 From the tough Trunk's big Bulk, back-bounding Blows recoil.
 But, still persisting, with unweary'd Will,
 Wide, toward the Root, a yawning Wound they make ;
 Whence scatt'ring Chips the bord'ring Bushes fill.
 Then, late, the nodding Oak begins to groan ;
 The leafy Limbs, in gen'ral Horror, shake :
 Bending, the Forest-Giant breaks, and is, at once, o'erthrown.

Down rolls the tumbling Monster, o'er the Rocks,
And sweeps the Grove before it, with its Sway :
From Cliff to Cliff rebounds, with frightful Shocks,
And gores the groaning Mountain, in its Way.
Broad, o'er the Plain below, it *loads* the shadow'd Ground ;
And grazing Herds, with stiffen'd Ear, start, trembling, from the Sound.



NOTES

N O T E S
AND
Miscellaneous REFLECTIONS
ON
The FIRST BOOK.

BEFORE the Reader enters on the Notes, in referential Order, He will probably forgive a short Remark or two upon the Nature of this Kind of Poem: The Age we live in, so profusely overflowing in the Practice without stopping to consider Judgment, that, to common Apprehensions, Poetry gives no Idea but of *Words with musical Cadences*: that is to say, plain Sense, in *Rhyme*, and *Measure*.

It may seem surprising, that Pretenders to this Faculty (few of us having been thought guilty of too little Sensibility) should rest contented, under the Injustice of so mortifying a Contraction!—A Poet, when consider'd in this narrow Light, were so contemptible a Creature, that he must give Place to a good *Piper*: who unquestionably has Power of raising *Sounds*, much more melodious, than Adjusters of mere *Words* are capable of equalling.

The Truth is, Numbers, in their softest, and most pleasing Fluency, make up but one Part of the *Means*, mistaken for the *End*. They were design'd but as a Vehicle, that should insinuate the instructive *Bitter*, hid behind the Promise of *Delight*. The Music having gain'd the Ear, the Matter thence found Entrance to the Heart; and there prevail'd against Distempers, which, but for the fine Disguise it came conceal'd in, it had never reach'd with such Advantage; there being a Reluctance in our Nature apt to rise against a plain Reproof; as, in our Taste, against such Physic, as is offer'd us too coarsely.

All,

All, as far as this, was well. The worst was, that this Sweetness in the Art expos'd it, by Degrees, to Profanation by the Ignorant. Prompt Adventurers were so glad, to find the *Pleasant* the most *Easy*, that This Handmaid of sup-
planted Poetry, like the treacherous *Mayors* of the *Palace* in *France*, sat her down
in, and possess'd, the Throne, she was design'd but as a Servant to.

The Learn'd will favour me with their Indulgence, while I note, for Satisfac-
tion of some Readers, of the Sex, that will be always surest to hold Interest in
a Poet's Purposes, that *Epic* Poems are so call'd, from a *Greek* Term for *speaking*;
because, here, the *Verse* runs *narratively*: as Stage Poems, on the contrary, are
call'd *Dramatic* ones, from the same Tongue, in Reference to their being *Acted*.

But it will be still more necessary, that some *Definition* of this Species should
be also given, by an Attempter of it, who has Modesty, and wishes to avoid a
Charge of high Presumption: Critics having represented it in such a formidable
Light, that they could possibly have done no more, had they been join'd in a
Confederacy to prevent Attempts to write at all, instead of furnishing Instructions
how to write discerningly.—It will suffice, to hear but one or two of These, as
Witnesses. The Voice is all the same; one Note throughout the whole Fra-
ternity.

“ It is (says *Rapin*) the most bold, and greatest Work, that human Wit is
“ capable of. All the Nobleness, and all the Elevation of the most perfect
“ Genius can hardly suffice to form one such as is requisite. The Difficulty of
“ finding, together, *Fancy*, and *Judgment*, Heat of Imagination, and Sobriety
“ of Reason, Precipitation of Spirit, and Solidity of Mind, causes the Rarity of
“ this Character's happy Temperament. It requires great Images, and yet a
“ greater Wit to form them.—Finally, there must be a Judgment so solid, a
“ Discernment so exquisite, such perfect Knowledge of the Language, in which
“ he writes, such obstinate Study, profound Meditation, and vast Capacity, that
“ scarce whole Ages can produce One Genius fit for an *Epic Poem*. And it is an
“ Enterprize so bold, that it cannot fall into a wise Man's Thoughts but it must
“ affright him.”

By this Time, it grows needful, that I hasten to cry out, and own, that the
most *vain*, and empty Wretch in Nature, would be such a *Poet* as, conceiving
the tenth Part of these prodigious Difficulties in his Way, which the *French*
Critic had, by overheating his Imagination, taught himself to think were really
there, should, notwithstanding such Belief, have Arrogance enough to undertake
a Work, so terribly beyond his Compass!—under which necessary Shield of
honest Truth, I will dare venture yet a little farther,—into what our own Sir
William Temple has declar'd on the same Subject.

“ I am apt (says he, in his *Essay* upon the Art we are considering) to believe
“ so much, of the Genius of Poetry, and of its Elevation, in *Homer's* and
“ *Virgil's* *Epic* Works, that I know not, whether, of all the Numbers of
“ Mankind, who live within the Compass of a thousand Years, for One Man
“ that is born, capable of making such a Poet, there may not be a thousand born,
“ capable

“capable of making as Great Generals of Armies, or Ministers of State, as any
“the most renown’d in Story.

Caveats, so high-strained as These, have made it necessary for an Epic Undertaker to say something, That may justify his Modesty. A Definition of it, therefore, in the humbler Light I see it by, may hope to shew it a less arduous Adventure; and demonstrate, that the Difficulty, however certainly considerable, is by no means so insuperable, as These Gentlemen appear to think it. Critical Systems reconcile two contradictory Extremes: and are, at once, too *vast*, and too *restrictive*. The Cause is, they lean with a too partial Bias, toward a few Great Names: to whose Example they would chain down Nature.

Many Friends of Fancy, on the other Side, mistake for Epic Poems, any Story, told in Verse, containing a wild Series of Romantic Incidents, related of some Hero, whom the Piece takes Name from. But there are scarce two Things in Nature, which more widely differ, than these Histories in Verse, from *Epic Poetry*.—I wish I could have satisfied myself with *Bossu’s* Definition: It had sav’d me the Presumption of attempting one, myself. But *His* appearing to be neither *full*, nor *clear*; and having never seen a better; I am forc’d on the necessity of hazarding a new one, of my own; which will, I fear, be, still, defective.

I take an *Epic Poem*, then, to mean some noble Lesson in Morality, delivered under Colour of *One Action*, which must be illustrious and important, in Itself, and in its Personages, interest supernatural Powers in its Successes, and be probably, delightfully, and surprisingly described, in Verse; with ornamental *Episodic Parts*, depending on, and rising naturally out of the main Tendency. Throughout all which the Poet keeps no view before him, but to strengthen, by Example, That one moral Lesson, he proposes to imprint, upon his Reader’s Admiration.

To explain This Definition, by enlarging its Particulars.—A Man, who undertakes an *Epic Poem*, is not to write a *History*; but to propagate a *Moral*. *Homer*, for Example, had conceiv’d such Purpose.—It was not his Design to write the *Fall of Troy*; That Story was already known; and could have brought no Novelty, but in the Pleasure of the Verses.—Pleasure was not his chief End: He aim’d to give *Advice*. His Prospect was, to teach the *Greeks*, split into little independent States, that *Union could recover Victory, when Discord had transferr’d it to an Enemy*. The *Grecian’s* Triumph over *Troy* was then discour’d of with much Vanity, through all their inconfederate Divisions. *Homer* observ’d this Sense of *General Glory*, and deriv’d a Story from it, that would best enforce the Moral, he prepar’d to teach ’em: borrowing Names, and Incidents from that remember’d, and high-boasted War; but giving ’em a new, and proper Turn, for the Conveyance of his Moral only.—Had *Homer* not been born, till *Alexander* had made *Greece* one Monarchy, the Moral he would then have chosen had been the *prosperous Effect of Power in one wise, and brave Man’s Hand: and what sure Benefits accrue from Subjects Loyalty*. As, we see, *Virgil*,
living

living in a Time, when the Republic of the *Romans* had given Place to Monarchy, made it the Purpose of his Poem, to reconcile his Countrymen to single Sovereignty in the Person of *Augustus*: under Fiction of a Prince, brave, wise, and pious, who, being guided by the favouring *Gods*, establish'd, on the Ruins, of the old, a new Foundation, for Dominion of so much more Potency, that the whole Empire of the World was, by Decree of Heaven, to be included in it.—From That new Empire, then possess'd by Those he writ to, All his Readers had deriv'd their Glory: so that it was easy to induce them to confide in, and to look for, the same Blessings from *their* Change of Government, which their great *Ancestors* had gain'd, by Change of Country.

To impress the Moral forcibly, some *Action* is to be related, pointing out an Instance, in as strong a Light as possible, where this insinuated Moral was prov'd good by an *Example*.—The Action must be *suitable*: That is, of Dignity adapted to the Greatness of Events wrought into it, as Steps toward the Result last purpos'd. It must be *single*: That is, unmix'd with other Actions of detach'd, or independent Tendency. There may be Incidents producing Incidents, the more Variety the better: but they must be such, as serve but to bring forward, and illustrate, the One final Action, which intends Example from the Work. Neither is *this* Restriction any Nicety deduc'd from the particular Opinion of This Critic, or of That: It is a natural Necessity; and a Law of Reason; because Actions not producing one another, as Effects from Causes, raise unpointed, and confus'd Reflections; and divert, and weaken an Attention, which it is the Business of This Poem to bind down to one strong Object. An Epic Poet, of the *Ariostine* Model, is a Traveller, who, if his Road lay strait through *Crete*, would take the *Labyrinth*, in his Journey.

The Action may be *feign'd*, or *real*: If no Story, fam'd in History, can be directly levell'd to the Poet's Purpose, He may, then, invent one, to his Liking: For the *Truth*, here necessary, consists not in the Reality of the Events, but in the natural Veracity existing in the *Moral*.

It must be *illustrious*, and *important*; and the Persons animating it, *Great Princes*, or distinguish'd *Leaders*: because Every Man submits to shrink, at Consciousness of Dangers, or Misfortunes, which he sees have Power to punish Error in these *Rulers* of the *World*. The Weakness of our Pride (that, looking down upon, conceives Itself secure, in its superior Situation, from all abject Misery) not daring to exempt itself from Menaces, It must *look up* to: but admitting, in this Case, the Apprehension of its own Exposure.

It must interest *supernatural Powers* in its *Successes*; the Influence of well-invented Circumstances, of this Kind, carrying *Terror* with it, that excites a Reverence, and induces Warmth, from *enthusiastic* Awefulness, into the Subject; consonant to those Impressions we are educated to religious Sense of: and which favour Disposition to derive All *Good* Propensities from *Heaven*; and throw off upon the *Devil*, all Instigations, which propel to *bad* ones.

It

It must be *probably*, *delightfully*, and *surprisingly*, described in Verse.—*Probably*, because whatever we suppose impossible, we find unworthy our Attention. *Delightfully*, because Variety of well-mark'd Characters, surprising Incidents, smooth-flowing Numbers, Strength of Imagery, exalted Thoughts, and beautiful Expression, keep awake our Expectation, stimulate the Fancy, and detain us, to the Author's Purpose.—And *surprisingly* is added separately, tho' a connected Consequence, and unavoidable Result, from such a well-maintain'd Succession of unlook'd for, and still varying, Beauties.

Episodes are necessary Members of extended Action: which, without them, would appear too short, and general. But all these Episodic Members must be *Limbs*, not *Wens*: They must unite with such Connexion, that displacing any *One*, will make the Rest imperfect; and that *adding Any* would disgrace the Symmetry.

In general, the Note most capable of height'ning our Regard to, and elucidating the asserted Force of *Epic Poetry*, is from a Recollection, that it comes down recommended to us by a Choice and Practice, that to Reason, joins the *best AUTHORITY*.—*And without a Parable, spoke He not to them.* Being ask'd by his Disciples, *WHY speakest thou to Them in Parables?* His Answer is, *Because to YOU it is given to understand the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; but to THEM it is NOT given.* That is, the Obstinacy of these People's Minds, misled by Habitudes of Evil, makes it necessary, that the Doctrine, I would teach them, should be cover'd, and approach attractively: where, else, the Pride, that alienates their Hearts, would rise against *Conviction*, press'd too plainly, and propos'd *without Disguise*; as Humble Men like *you* are willing to receive it.

It is probable, the *Hebrews* carried with 'em, out of *Egypt*, this delightful Way of teaching; It is clear, at least, that they arriv'd to great Perfection in it, before *Greece* grew civiliz'd from rude Barbarity. So far is it from true, that *Homer*, or some other Poet of his Country, was Inventer of the *Epic Species*. All the Books of the Old Testament abound with Instances, which prove the Skill of *Hebrew Poets*. And the Six hundred thousand Volumes in the *Ptolemaic Library* could hardly fail to have contain'd some of their Poems of this Kind, in their due Length and Dignity.

To shew how little Difference there is, except in Ornament, and Size, between the Epic Poem, as above defined, and the short Parables, I have been speaking of, I will select *Two* only: the first, taken from the Mouth of *Christ Himself*. The other I will go so far more backward for, as to the Reign of *David*, who was King of *Israel* so soon after the *Trojan War*, that he must necessarily have liv'd before the Time of *Homer*, to whom *Greece* would partially ascribe the Merit of poetically teaching moral Truth by Fable. I shall give more Instances than one, of the unwarrantable Presumption of those *Grecians* Vanity, in arrogating to Themselves a Praise for Arts they borrow'd from the *Asiatic People*; and the *Hebrews*, in particular.

The Persecution of the Prophets, by the *Jewish Priests*, was what *Christ* purpos'd to *reprove*: but knew, their Power was great; and that the Pride, It had inspir'd 'em with, would render a distasteful Doctrine little Fruit, if not engagingly insinuated. Under this Conviction, the Divine Reprover thus addresses them. "There liv'd, says he, in a far Country, a powerful Land-owner, who had planted Vineyards, rais'd Inclosures, and built habitable Farms, on a detach'd Part of his Territory. He let out These to Husbandmen; and went, Himself, to where his chief Seat stood; upon a very distant Tract of his Possessions.—When the proper Season came, the Lord sent Servants to demand his Rents grown due. But those ungrateful Tenants, trusting to the Distance for Security from due Revenge, instead of Payment, *murder'd* the Demanders; They destroy'd in the same Manner, other Servants, sent with like Commission: At last, resolv'd to try their Boldness to the utmost, His own Son was sent, to whom, it was suppos'd, they could not dare refuse their Reverence. But the Tenants, on the Heir's Appearance, hoping, by *His* Death, to make Themselves a lasting Title to the whole Inheritance, determin'd on That execrable Deed; and kill'd *Him also*:"—The Auditors inflam'd to an impatient Indignation, interrupt the Story, in this Part of it, and cry out angrily—"The *Lord* should have destroyed Those wicked Wretches, and let out his Vineyard to *honestest Husbandmen*." And, there, condemn'd by their own Sentence, and struck dumb by conscious Shame, they catch the *Application*, before *Christ* proceeds to make it: for, as the Text expresses it, *They consider'd his Parable, and perceiv'd, that he spoke of Them*.

In the second Instance, *Nathan* reproaches *David*, who had robb'd *Uriah* of his Wife, and caus'd the Husband to be murder'd. But the Prophet, understanding well the Danger of the King's Resentment, casts about to take him by Surprise, and does it under this Disguise of *Parable*. "I am come, says he, to ask Relief from Royal Justice, in Revenge of a poor Sufferer's Distress, against the Cruelty of his Oppressor. Two Men liv'd together: one rich, the other poor. The rich Man had exceeding many Flocks and Herds; but the poor Man had nothing, save one little Ewe-Lamb, which he had bought, and nourish'd up: and it grew up together with Him, and with his Children. It eat of his own Meat, and drank of his own Cup, and lay in his Bosom, and was unto him as a Daughter. And there came a Traveller to the Rich Man: and he spar'd to take of his own Flock, but took the Poor Man's Lamb, and dress'd it, for the Man, that was come to him."

What Effect this little Story presently produc'd the Sequel tells us. *And David's Anger was greatly kindled against the Man: And he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the Man, that has done This Thing, shall surely die, because he had no Pity*. And *Nathan* said to *David*, *Thou art the Man*. He, then, proceeded, safely, and reproached him, that he had tyrannically given way to an illegal Impulse of Desire; forcing away the only Wife, of a most faithful Subject, notwithstanding the unlimited Variety of Women, who were All His own. Had

Nathan spoke the Truth thus plainly, at its opening, It had prov'd, perhaps, of dangerous Consequence to his own Life: but the Cloud of the Invention shielded him; and the King's Passions having first been artfully secur'd in the Reproacher's Interest, the Reproach'd, who had confess'd a generous Sense of the Dishonesty, while not consider'd as his own, became asham'd to disavow his Virtue, when the Guilt laid Claim to his Confession. So *David* said to *Nathan*, "—I have sinn'd against the Lord."—It is impossible to produce a livelier, or more pathetic, Proof, both of the Nature and the Power of *Epic Poetry*: For it is evident, that these Two *Parables* differ in nothing, but their Want of Names, Extent, and Paint of Circumstance, from the *Poems* of That Nomination.

From their general Nature, I proceed to the particular Consideration of this new Attempt, upon the Plan of *Gideon*.

A Poet, in an Age so factious as the Last has been, must have been blind, not to discern the Usefulness of recommending *Quiet*, to a stormy Generation. It were saying nothing to the Purpose, to object, that we are now remote from *Israel's* Case, under no Yoke of Conquest, and above all Danger from a foreign Enemy. Civil Contest will be always the most likely Means of calling in, and aiding the Attempts of, such an Enemy. We have seen too recent Proofs, to doubt that Certainty. But, not to dwell unnecessarily upon our present happy Prospects, our invaded Ancestors, too often, felt the Weight of such a Situation, as had made a *Gideon* the most welcome Public Blessing.—Could they have found him, and could all his *Miracles* have serv'd but to unite them in one Wish, and one Endeavour, far less lasting, and less bloody, had Those various Insults, then, been represented, under the Disgrace whereof our History blushes, while it tells the Triumphs of so many Conquests over us,—by *Romans*, *Saxons*, *Danes*, and *Normans*!—Where, therefore, is the Nation to be found, that better ought to like, than Ours, a strong *Example*, to so sound a Moral, as, that *tho' Disunion should enslave a People, joint Attachment to the Legal Government could soon recover, and protect lost Liberty?*

To cloathe this Moral in an *Action*, some such disunited People was to be made Choice of, suff'ring under foreign Conquest, from Effect of their Divisions, and, when every human Hope had fail'd 'em, rais'd, at once, from their Despair, by Union of an inconsiderable Number, under a Restorer of their Laws and Freedom.

This being what the Critics call the Allegorical, or General, Plan, I never could have found a fitter *Action* to illustrate it, than the Redemption of the *Hebrews*, under *Gideon's* Conduct, from the Yoke of foreign Conquest, as impos'd with infinite Contempt and Cruelty, by a confederate Body of *Arabian* Princes; whom the sacred Writ distinguishes by the joint Name of *Midianites*. For the Events of this great War are, *there*, so comprehensively related, as to suit at once with the Design, they are selected for, and leave sufficient Scope for bold Invention, and Embellishment, in the particular Deduction. Whereas the Scripture History of *David* (Mr. *Cowley's* Choice) was a *completed* one, as Mr. *Rymer* has objected to it, and is so circumstantially describ'd, as to restrain a

Poet's Fancy. Mr. *Dryden*, for this Reason, could not have succeeded, in That favourite Design of His, for forming a new Epic Poem from the Story of our Civil Wars in the last Century. Yet, I remember he has somewhere told us, that King *Charles* the Second, whom he had acquainted with his Purpose, very much approv'd it: notwithstanding which, I take it to have been to the Advantage of That Great Man's Memory, that his Design was never executed. The Story was too recent, to be treated, as it ought; and the sublimest Beauties of Invention would have lost their Force on Readers, in whom sad and deep Impressions, from the Misery of the real Facts, must needs have made All Fiction seem too *sportive*, and an unbecoming Freedom taken with their solemn Sorrow. It was the very Case of *Lucan*; and his Subject barring out all Aids of the Poetic Kind, at least Those warm ones, which let loose Imagination, his *Pharsalia* gain'd no Rank but among *Histories*; and *Verse*, indeed, is all the Right of That great Work to be consider'd, as a *Poem*.

The Mention, here, of Mr. *Rymer* leads me to remember an Objection, which, I think, he has unjustly made to Mr. *Cowley*'s Choice of Subject, merely as a foreign one: as if it were a Violation of that natural Respect, a Poet owes his Country, to look out of it, for a great Character! If Mr. *Rymer* had no better Reason for this Censure, than that since *Homer* was a *Grecian*, and has writ of *Greeks*, and *Virgil*, being a *Roman*, writ of *Romans*, therefore, Mr. *Cowley*, as an *Englishman*, should have approv'd no other than an *English* Hero, the Argument appears, to me, to be a very narrow, and mean-spirited one.—Nature is Nature every-where; and I should never look for any Force of manly Reasoning, from a Soul not large enough, to comprehend Mankind as One Fraternity.—However, more is to be said, in Favour of a *Hebrew* Subject, than of All, or Any of, the Rest, whatever.—The Reverence, we conceive, from the Old Testament, for Those Objects of God's more immediate Care, has made Them *Every Body's Countrymen*. Besides, the many *Miracles*, so terribly display'd among them, are peculiar Helps, to a Poetic Fancy; and adorn their History, above that of *Any* other Nation. Their Country was the Scene, too, of our *Saviour's* Life, and Sufferings, a Reflection, which entitles it to Veneration, from All *Christians*. And, to add one smaller Circumstance, that still gives Strengthning to their Claim, They were Inventors, or, at least, Improvers, and great Practisers, of *Poetry*. The *Song of Moses*, their first Leader, lifts Him early in the Number.—*Miriam*, *Deborah*, *David*, *Solomon*, and innumerable other of their Nation, were fine Poets. And This ought, methinks, to recommend their Memory to the Respect of such, who would be thought so, after them.

Having said this, the Reader, I believe, will hardly be displeas'd to see a *Specimen of Hebrew Poetry*. We meet with many noble ones, in the Old Testament; but they have the Misfortune to lie shadow'd under obsolete Translation.—One of our Critics has done Justice to the noble Images of these Originals, when he declares, that *there is nothing, so soft, so tender, and pathetic, and at*
the

the same Time, nothing so grand, so majestic, so terrible; and so harmonious, as the Poetic Part of the Bible: to which All the Heathen Verse is flat, and low.

I look upon the *Song of Moses*, which *Josephus* says, was written in *Hexameter Verse*, to have been a Kind of *Lyric Ode*, because it seems to have been sung, to some String-Music, and to certain measur'd Motions of the Body. This is plainly gather'd from the Text. "And *Miriam* the Prophetess, the Sister of *Aaron*, "took a *Timbrel* in her Hand, and all the Women follow'd her, with *Timbrels*, "and with *Dances*."—And, when *Moses*, and the male Singers, had open'd the Ode, *Miriam*, and the Women, answer'd, as a *Chorus*, "Sing ye to the Lord, "for He hath triumph'd gloriously: The Horse, and his Rider, hath he thrown "into the Sea!"

I leave out the first Verse; as conceiving it to have been but a General *Head*, and begin at the next following.

SONG of THANKSGIVING, by MOSES.

On the Overthrow of Pharaoh, in the Red Sea.

From EXODUS, Chap. xv.

The First Part only.

I.

Temples, and Altars, let us raise,
Ours, and our Father's God provokes our Praise.
God is our Strength, God is our Theme:
Where is Egypt's fall'n Esteem?
Pharaoh wakes from his proud *Dream*.
Wakes, to feel a Warrior's Hand,
Lord of a Power, more vast than *His*—that shakes his wond'ring Land!
Vainly, the following Foes *our* God defied,
Their rapid Wheels, in vain, tore up the Strand:
In vain they *mock'd* the waving Wand;
Not all their Noise could the loud *Sea* withstand;
The *wat'ry World* flow'd fearless, o'er their Pride,
A *drowning Army* beat th' involving Tide:
On Wave-wash'd Chariots, half-sustain'd, the trembling Captains ride!
Uplifted *Hoofs* paw'd loose the liquid Way:
And, round 'em, *black'ning* thro' the Foam, the floating Legions lay.
Down, down, th' ungrounded Footsteps go:
Strain'd, to feel for *Sands*, below,
Sands,—where *watry Mountains* flow!
Sinking, like Rocks, they clog the Deep with Prey:
High-cov'ring rose the briny Flood, and swept their Rage away.

II.

II.

Saving GOD! Thy Hand was here!

Thou protecting, who can fear?

Threat'ning aloud, the thund'ring Legions rose,

And, at thy *Chosen*, shook th' extended Spear.

Behind, amaz'd! we saw th' o'ertaking Foes,

Hearts *anticipating* Blows.

But, while thy Blast, O, base Despair, blew keen,

Safety, from Heaven, shot down, between!

Dreadful in Wrath, Thy lifted Arm but shone,

And All th' unnumber'd Thousands melt away:

O'er stubbly Fields, so, Wind-driv'n *Fire* rolls on,

And sweeps the blazing Breadth, with crackly Sway.

III.

Th' Almighty's Voice but spoke a loud Command,

And, strait, th' unlinking Surges, backward, rise:

High-climbing Waves in quiv'ring Mountains stand,

And hang their billowy Horrors in the *Skies*!

In murm'ring *Cleft*, th' obedient Deep yawns wide;

And shadowy *Glooms* lowre dark, from either Side!

Down, thro' the horrid *Vale*'s moist Concave, led,

Safe, and dry, bold *Israel* trod.

Gay, 'twixt Terrors, round her, spread!

Her tear-full Eye now-smil'd, once more, and hail'd her guardian God.

IV.

Hark! aloft, the wond'ring Foe!

Look! they cry'd, All *pointing low*,

Shall the Cowards 'scape us, so?

'Twixt the *dividing Waves*, they go!

Their *Sorc'rer* cleaves the Sea, with *magic* Skill;

Haste, prevent, o'ertake, and *kill*.

They hear, they march—they dare the mad Command:

The Shouting *Squares* invade the cover'd Strand;

Chariots, impell'd on fiery Wheels, gore wide th'encumber'd Sand.

Mix'd Horse and Foot, in *bann'ry Pomp*, descend!

See! from each Horn, th' *inclining Length'ners* bend,

Loose, slides the weeping *Oose*, to shun their Weight,

And the Deep, *murm'ring*, mourns the *unusual* State.

V.

Hark! the bursting Thunder *speaks!*
Waves, your watry Ranks disband.
 Oh! behold! how *vain*, how *weak*,
 Strength, that dares its God withstand!
 Down, at once, from either Hand,
 Hoarse-founding Hills, o'er Hills let loose, devour the vanish'd Sand!
 Helpless, engulf'd, th'immerging Squadrons roll:
Pharaoh, proud-sinking, drinks down *Brine*, that chills his fiery Soul.
 Mix'd on th'evolving Surge, awhile, they strive;
 Then, like sunk Plumbets, to the Bottom, dive.
 Of all the Gods, no God, like *Ours*, is found!
 Join, Heav'n, and Earth, Applause like *His*, let *Men*, and *Angels* found.

It will not be denied, that here is the *Sublime* among these Images, more glowing, than in any *Greek*, or *Roman* Writer.—When *Longinus* seems to have been moved so strongly by That prais'd Exaltedness of Thought, where *Moses*, to express God's Power, with Energy, describes Creation, not in its extended gradatory Progress, but as starting to Existence *at a Word*: “*Let there be Light: and there was Light*”—I half suspect, with the *French Critic*, He had heard of, but *not seen*, the *Hebrew Bible*. He could never else have passed by the prodigious Greatness, in the Paintings, and Conception, of the Ode foregoing; and in many other Tracts of *Scripture Poetry*. Would he have so profusely given his Admiration to this Passage, out of *Homer*,

“At ev'ry Step th'immortal *Neptune* took,
 “The Mountains trembled, and their Forests shook?”
 and have said nothing, upon That of *David*?

Hills felt their God's *Approach*, and, veil'd in *Night*,
 Sunk, thro' their trembling *Roots*, to 'scape his Sight.

We may pity, then, the *Grecian Vanity*, that would divide the Honour of inventing Poetry, between their *Orpheus*, *Stesichorus*, *Alcman*, *Pindar*, and a Number of their Countrymen; whereas, in Truth, the oldest of all These, who was *Orpheus*, was but a Cotemporary with *Gideon*: in whose Eleventh Year he went, a young Man, with the *Argonauts* to *Colchos*.—Now *Gideon* was 200 Years *since Moses*; and yet *Moses* died not till the Year of the World 2454. Forty-one years after writing the foregoing Ode, which must have been at his first landing in *Arabia*, after crossing the *Red Sea*, in the World's Year 2413.—So that the *Hebrews* had the practical Perfection of the *Lyric Species* for at least 200 Years before the Birth of this Assumer, *Orpheus*, whom the *Greeks* pretend to have been its original Inventer.

It is, indeed, the most unreasonable Improbability, that *Greece* should have been skill'd in so refin'd an Art as *Poetry*, when she was little better than a *Savage*; so deficient in Improvements of this ornamental Quality, that, as *St. Augustine* has noted, the more necessary Use even of the *Grape* was still unknown to the politeſt of thoſe People (the *Athenians*), till by *Dionysius*, in the Time of *Moses*: and a *Greek Poet*, wanting *Wine*, had miſs'd a ſurer *Inſpiration*, than his *Muſe's*. — *Erichonius* of *Athens* was the firſt Inſtructor of his Countrymen, to yoke their Beaſts, for *Plowing*: and That, not till *Joſhua's* Days: And it was then, too, that the Use of *Letters* was communicated to the *Greeks*, by *Cadmus*, from *Phœnicia*, a cloſe Borderer on the *Hebrews*. — Before that Time, having no *Alphabet*, how could they make Pretence to *Writing*? The ſame national Vanity was manifeſt again, in their aſſerting *Ida*, and *Dactylus*, who liv'd but after *Joſhua's* Death, during the Government of *Othaniel*, to have diſcovered the firſt Use of *Iron*; when 'tis plain, from the Old Teſtament (*Genesis* iv. and 22.) that *Tubal Cain*, above a Thouſand Years before, had taught *Artificers the Workmanſhip of Iron and Braſs*: And nothing can be more demonſtrable (from the ſo often-mentioned *Chariots, Weapons, Armour*, and vaſt Magazines of warlike Furniture of all Kinds, which we read of, among Kings of *Egypt* and *Aſſyria*), than that the People of the *East* were exquiſitely ſkill'd in ſuch mechanic Knowledge, at a Time, when *Greece* had yet no Name among the Nations. *Thucydides*, their own Hiſtorian, has confeſs'd, that in theſe early Days, wherein ſhe would pretend to arrogate Inventions never Hers, ſhe was unciviliz'd, and wholly rude: her Lands uncultivated, her Towns ſew, and mean, and the Employment of her *Heroes*, and high *Demi-Gods*, to rove for Robberies, by Sea and Land; ſteal Horſes, and make bold with other People's Cattle; without Senſe of Shame, or Secrecy.

But I forget the *Elegy*, which Mr. *Cowley* juſtly calls a moſt poetical, and excellent one. — He purpoſ'd to have clos'd his *Davideis* with it. — It appears to me a Maſter-piece of the *pathetic* Kind: and I produce it, as an Inſtance, that the *Hebrews* were thus ſkilful, in the *ſimple* Species; which the *Greeks*, too, with their uſual Modeſty, put in for the Invention of, long after this fine Piece had been compoſed by *David*.

ELEGY by DAVID:

For the Death of SAUL and JONATHAN.

(2 KINGS, Chap. i.)

I.

O, *Israel*! how does all thy Beauty fade!
How are the Mighty fall'n! the Strong betray'd!
Ne'er may this Woe in *Gath's* full Streets be told:
Never, let *Aſcalon* our Fate unfold.

II.

II.

Mountains of *Gilboa*! may ye drink no Dew!
 Let Rain's mourn'd Want turn *red* your verdant Hue!
 Let your Vines wither, and your Olives die:
 And your parch'd Fields no grainy Wealth supply.
 For, *there*, abandon'd *Saul*, brave Monarch! bled:
 As if no awful *Oil* had hemm'd his Head.

III.

Never, in vain, drew *Jonathan* his *Bow*,
 Never *Saul's* *Sword* fell, frustrate, on a Foe:
 Lovely, and loving! one dear Life they led:
 Nor parted, *dying*, but *together* bled.
 Swifter than *Eagles*, to the *Fight* they flew,
 Stronger than *Lions*, they could Foes *pursue*.

IV.

Daughters of *Israel*! weep the Loss of *Saul*:
 In Scarlet, and in Gold, he cloth'd you All.
 Peaceful, beneath his warlike Shade, you smil'd:
 And triumph'd by *Their* Toil, whose Hosts he *spoil'd*.

V.

Thee, *Jonathan*, my Brother! Thee I mourn,
 With Grief still growing must thy Loss be borne!
 Soft, and delightful *Partner*, of my Soul!
 Two Halfs, divided, made us one dear *Whole*.
 Vast was Thy Love, and wonderful, to *me*:
 And never *Woman* lov'd, as I lov'd THEE.

I have said enough, I hope, to justify my Choice of *foreign* Action, and a *Hebrew* one particularly.—I come now to the new Structure of my Verse: where I have us'd the Liberty of *varying*, every-where, the *Measure*, and of mixing, in one Poem, All the different Kinds, that can be rank'd among *Heroic*.—What I hop'd from this Extent of Latitude was, to derive Increase of *Power*, as well as *Harmony*. But, as this Choice, and Application of such bold Diversity of Numbers, will require, and merit, some Defence, I will begin it with a previous Note or two in Answer to a modern Cry, that has been rais'd against the Use of *Rhyme*, in general.

It has been attack'd, but, since we learn'd to *read*, and understand, *Blank Verse*, from Mr. *Milton's* noble Work: which (by the way) lay half an Age, at least,

unfelt, unfriended, and un-notic'd, in the Country It now casts so bright a Lustre on. The Copy of it was (with *Doubt* and *Hesitation*) bought—for infamous TEN POUNDS! which not being made demandable but on Condition of a *new Impression*, never was receiv'd, at all; Its Author having been in his neglected Grave near Thirty Years, before his matchless Poem (and *then* only by Effect of One Man's single Penetration) drew the least Regard upon it from his Countrymen! to the eternal Scandal be it noted, of our high-presum'd Discernment, and the miserable State of *Patronage*, among us!—This was the hospitable Welcome Blank Verse found, in *England*: And, *now* (so strangely can our Currents *turn*!) our Gentlemen of the new Light are indispos'd to *see*, by *any other*. They affect the Reputation of a Judgment too severe, to be delighted by Effect of *Sounds*: and would explode all Consonance of Termination, as too trifling, and effeminate, for Ears of Understanding.

What they have objected may, I think, be summ'd up in these few Particulars. *Rhyme* was a *Goth*, and came in with the *Runic* Impoliteness: *Rhyme* is *unnatural*: because it puts Constraint upon Expression: *Rhyme* is *needleless*; because Blank Verse has nobler Harmony, and gives complete Delight without it.

As to the first of These, 'tis quite mistaken. *Rhyme* *did not* come in with those Barbarities, they charge it to: and, if it *had* done so, what nobler Parentage could It have been deriv'd from, than the *same to which we owe our Plans of Liberty*? But, in Reality, It had a far more antient Origin. The *Hebrew* Poetry was writ with *Rhyme*. The *Persian*, and *Arabian*, so peculiarly depended on this Ornament, that they have a Kind of Poem in distinguish'd Reverence among them (and call'd *Cacideh*) deriv'd from immemorial Practice, and devoted to the Praise of GOD, and godlike Characters. Its Frame contains from 50 to 100 Distics: the two leading Verses rhyme together, and the Rest alternatively, keeping, throughout, but two Rhymes only. So that these Poems run the longest, when they light upon such Terminations, as afford most Consonances. There are many such, of *Giami*, *Hafis*, *Schemi*, *Enviri*, and others. Some of them appear to have been moderniz'd *Reductions* (as our *Chaucer's* Works, by *Dryden*) their old Language being grown obscure, in Both of the Countries above-mentioned.—So, this Argument, of *Rhyme's* Defect from want of due Antiquity, will carry little Weight against it; and might have an Answer still more pointed and particular, if it deserv'd to be allow'd, that Any-thing, in its own Nature good, could be the less so, for its *Novelty*.

They call *Rhyme* *unnatural*, because it puts Constraint upon Expression; which, however, is *not true*; for Poets have not only Liberty of *changing* stubborn Rhymes for ductile ones, but are *oblig'd to do it*, till they find such new ones, as *assist* the Sense, instead of stiffening, or obscuring it. But, were there All the *Force* they would ascribe to it, in this Objection, from *Constraint* on the *Expression*, what a *partial Eye* is *Theirs*, who censure such Constraint, as an unpardonable Slavery, where authoriz'd by Custom in a *modern Tongue*; yet see no Consequence

quence but That of a *pretended Beauty* where it borrows Sanction, but from the same Authority, of *Custom*, in the Antient Languages?

For, not to rest upon their hard, and troublesome Restraints, to *Quantity*, what Curb can possibly be more oppos'd to *Nature*, and her easy Order of *Expression*, than their interweaving Words, and ranging them in so remote, and dislocative a Position, as the *patulæ* in *Virgil's* Verse hereunder, from the *fagi*, it immediately related to? for, while the genuine Construction is, *You, Tityrus, reposing under the Shade of a spreading Beech*, the *Latin* was constrain'd, before it could arrange the Line to Harmony, to force it into this distorted Order.

Tityre, tu, *patulæ* recubans sub tegmine *fagi*.

That is, in *English* of the same Position,

Tityrus, you, *of a spreading* reposing under the Shade, *Beech*.

What strange Perplexity is, here (by Custom, which we can indulge, without a Question) thrown upon the *Sense*, to liquidate the *Sound*, and make the Measure *musical*!—Let the Reproachers of *constrain'd Expression* shew where *Rhyme* has ever wrung an *English* Verse into so cramp'd a Posture.

So, again, in *Martial*,

Castæ suo gladium cum traderet Arria Pæto.

What a charming Figure, in *our* Language, does This *Latin* Licence make, in the same literal Arrangement!

Cast her Sword when had deliver'd Arria to Pætus.

It must not be pretended, that these Instances are *chosen* ones. The very Genius of the *Roman* Tongue made such disjointed Shuffle of the Words, for ever necessary: And, yet, which of our Exploders of the *infinitely less-constraining* Use of *Rhyme* would think it reasonable to condemn the not to be disputed Elegance of *Latin Verse*, in Detestation of a Practice, which is *visibly unnatural*?

Even their celebrated *Horace*, notwithstanding his peculiar Claim to the *Concinnitas*, and That *Curiosa Felicitas*, so exquisitely fine, in his Expression, could no more sail free from the oblique Propulsion of this *Side Wind*, that blew every *Roman* Poet wide of his true Course, than Any weaker, and more careless Pilot. Witness his

*Me doctarum bederæ præmia frontium
Diis miscent superis.*

What would be thought of a Writer, in *our* Tongue, who, when he was purposing to say clearly, *Ivy Garlands, the Rewards of learn'd Brows, rank me*

with the High Gods, should express it in this extraordinary Manner—*Me of learned Ivy Garlands the Rewards Brows with the Gods rank high.*

Surely, no Man, who, knowing *Latin*, knows that such Constraint as This is unavoidable, in all their Versification, will pretend to argue, against *Rhyme*, that It can possibly deserve Explosion for a Fault, It is not half so guilty of, as This allow'd bad Practice; which is, notwithstanding, overlook'd, and held as *nothing*, in Comparison with the acknowleg'd Graces, in the Tongues it throws such Intricacy on!

Rhyme, then, is neither *newer*, in its Practice, nor less *natural*, in its Use, than other Licences to Verse, which, yet, its Enemies are very partially attach'd to.—We will see, in the *last* Charge, whether It ought to be held *needless*, from Superiority of Harmony, or any nobler, or more masculine Perfection in *Blank Verse*—or Measure without Consonance.

Lord *Roscommon*, one of the first Fallers in with the Applause of *Milton* (newly, in *His* Time, beginning to attract Consenters), writes his *Essay on translated Verse*, in the best *Rhyme* he found Himself at Leisure to afford it: But, drawing near the End, and growing out of Humour with his Choice, breaks out at once into a rapturous Declamation, against *Rhyme*, and *Bondage*; in a Specimen, which he picks, here and there, and pieces artfully together, out of some of the sublimest Parts of *Paradise lost*, to recommend Blank Verse, where He, Himself, had just been disregarding it. I think this Manner of proceeding not a fair one: The strong Images, which animate the glowing Lines, he there selected, would have made *Prose*, Poetry. They shake the Fancy, and allow no Leisure to the Judgment to examine *Numbers*.—We are hurried on by the Exaltedness of Thought, and rise above Perception of the Mechanism! Would he have try'd the Cause impartially, he might have found a thousand Lines in *Milton*, every one of which had turn'd it quite to the Reverse of his Intention.

But now, to let the Reader see, what Kind of Verse it is, these Gentlemen would substitute in Place of Rhyme, I take the following Pattern from the mention'd Lord's Translation of the *Ars Poetica*.

These are the likest Copies, which are drawn
By the Original of Human Life.
Sometimes, in rough and undigested Plays,
We meet with such a lucky Character,
As, being humour'd right, and well pursu'd,
Succeeds much better, than the shallow Verse,
And *chiming* Trifles, of more studious Pens.

We shall presently discern, by only placing these lean Lines in the *prosaic* Order, whether they have any Title to their Claim of Poetry.—VERSE, in the *literal* Sense, we must allow it to be call'd, because we but derive the Word from *turning back*; and These, I own, *do That*, as oft as they have stretch'd themselves

selves to their due Length of Measure. But observe, how readily this Prose may be *unversified* !

“ These are the likest Copies, which are drawn by the Original of Human Life. Sometimes, in rough and undigested Plays, we meet with such a lucky Character, as, being humour’d right, and well pursu’d, succeeds much better, than the shallow Verse, and chiming Trifles, of more studious Pens.”

If the Enemies to Rhyme had nothing better to produce in Room of it, than *This*, It would not fail to *live* and prosper ; nor, indeed, is there an Argument they use for the Defence of their Opinion, but might better aid their Enemies ; and serve (as most Deserters do) with double Violence, against its Masters. Meanwhile It is a pleasant Kind of Tyranny they are for exercising over Reason ! First, they warp to their own Side the Pretence of Right to Harmony : and when they have apply’d all Sorts of Argument, unjustly, for their Service, and left none for ours, but what they think they may refuse us, as of *Counsel for the Plaintiff*, they would run us down, full Cry, as if we had no Weapons to defend ourselves withal.—It puts me in Mind of an honest *Indian Traveller*, who coming, in hard Weather, to ask something, at the House of a Great Man, and being bark’d at by his *Mastives*, stoop’d for a Flint, but found it frozen to the Surface. Deliver me, said he, from the unreasonable People of this Country ! *They let loose their Dogs, and fasten their Stones.*

In *Tragedy*, Blank Verse may claim a *Preference*, as coming nearer to our natural Mode of Speech, and yet retaining Dignity enough, by virtue of its Measure, to exalt it above *Prose*. But *Epic* Poets speak in Person ; and, describing at full Leisure, are suppos’d to have due Time for *Ornament* ; and it will therefore be expected from them : so that Blank Verse does not suit *Their* Use ; since where its Flatness is not animated, as in *Tragedy*, by restless Agitation of the Passions, It must ever lean to one of these Extremes : either degenerating to plain Prose, as in the Example before us ; or becoming harsh, affected, stiff, and obsolete ; as but too many Times it does, in our Great *Milton*, from a Purpose to induce Appearance, of the *Venerable*, where the *Sweet* was wanting.

The delightful *Mean* is *Rhyme*. It keeps Prose distant, yet helps *Ease*, as well as *Energy* : for it was never meant to cramp Expression, but lend Sound a Liveliness ; and, what is evidently (and indeed *peculiarly*) a Benefit deriv’d from this connective Aid to Recollection, is, that by Retention of the *Rhyme*, the Memory catching readily at the coherent *Matter*, it becomes much easier to *hold* Ideas this way given us, than in Any other Form of Words whatever.

Mr. *Dennis*, who was one, of a too numerous Brotherhood, who suffer Pangs, in mortifying Lengths of *Labour*, at the Birth of Every Rhyme, and therefore, naturally *bate* the Child, that cost ’em too much Pain in its Delivery, was for turning his broad Axe against our very Root of Argument, and has denied, that Rhyme is *musical*, because, says he, there is *no Harmony in Unisons*. The Face of this Pretence is specious : but It ought, before it can have real Weight, to find some Poem, where *All* Terminations close with the same Rhyme *repeated*.

No

No *one Note*, indeed, will make a *Tune*: But, as we hear with Pleasure the same Note sounded sometimes twice, or thrice (in solemn Compositions more especially), and then give way to different ones, the artful Intermixture of All which is *Music*, so any tuneful Note, tho' sounded separately, and more than once, is *Harmony*.—No JARRING Note can stand in Music. *Discord* there must be; but That Discordance is to rise, from Oppositions *All harmonious* in their proper, and disjunctive Particles: and but differing (not *clashing*) into Melody, by joint Concurrence of *Variations*; not of *Inconsistencies*.—Neither will it be needful to confess, that Rhymes are *Unisons*. The Question is of no Importance, or it would be easy to explain their Difference.

Another Reason in Behalf of Rhyme is, that no Language is so naturally form'd, as *English*, for receiving and becoming it. The *Latin Verse*, tormented and constrain'd, as I have shewn it, in Pursuit of Harmony, could no way have admitted *This*: which that it was not in its Genius constituted for, or capable of, we need no plainer Proofs, than the sequester'd Muses of the *Monks* have furnish'd us—if ever *Muse*, at all, inspir'd a *Monastery*.

———Vir *honoratus*—jacet hîc *tumulatus*,
Qui prudens, *gratus*—justus fuit, et *moderatus*.

And again:

Hîc Vir *pacificus* Shipley Richardus *humatur*,
Verus Catholicus, Domus hæc hoc *testificatur*.

Which, to english 'em, just as well as they deserve, would thus be render'd.

Here a brave Man is *thrust*—down deep in the *Dust*,
Who was true to his *Trust*—prudent, mod'rate, and just.

And, for the other,

Poor peaceful *Dick Shipley's* here left in the *Lurch*:
That he was a good *Catholic*, witness this *Church*.

Not even the *Greek Tongue* could have been capable of *Rhyme*: nor had it truly the least want of it.—It was so musically ductile, so sonorously significant, that it was naturally a full Tide of Harmony: It seem'd to roll along, like one of its own *Homer's* Torrents, down the Side of a vast Mountain; sparkling, rapid, and sounding, in all Parts of its Passage.

Yet, fain would I, with all the partial Fondness of a Lover, set in Balance some *Defects*, of this triumphant Rival of the Beauty I wish best to, against That great Advantage, which it would be Blindness to deny her claim to, in the tuneful Texture of her Cadences. I detest, for Instance, those abominable Aids, call'd *Expletives*: a mean, and lazy Crutch, which not the *lamest* Poet of our Nation,

Nation, now, submits to heave himself along by! They were the dull, and insignificant *Stop-gaps* of *Greek* Inclosures; a Degree at least below the venerable *from whences, for to's, unto's, and fine eke's and aye's*, of our old cleric Compositions.

But if Sincerity refuses Patience to a calm Surveyor of this *Grecian Licence*, what would it not inspire Contempt to *say*, against the servile Disposition of a Race, call'd *Commentators*, who would have the Privilege, Their Poets us'd, of mixing in one Piece, their different *Dialects*, and altering Accents, at their Pleasure, pass for an *Advantage* to their Poetry! as if People, long habituated to a Pronunciation the Reverse of many of those motley Rusticisms, could, in Reverence of a worthless Skill in weaving them together, quit their natural Partiality to their own Mode of speaking!—On the contrary, rejected Idioms must have been extremely irksome to a polish'd Ear: and left a Kind of coarse provincial *Brogue*, upon the best Performances.

Were an *English* Poet, for Example, to avail himself of this licentious Practice of the *Greek* ones, in extending these five Words to *Numbers*, and due Length of *Metre*,—*These People were learned Writers*; and admit he should be told that, in some Counties of the *North* and *West*, it was a Custom to give drawling Prolongation to their Syllables, and open all the *Diphthongs*; and that, by Assistance of this *noble Privilege*, He might spin out a Verse, thus elegantly,

Le—ar—ned Writers These Pe—o—ple were.

Or, because it would be Pity to want *Choice* of good Examples, let it be suppos'd, that the Three Words—*meet, glorious, Occasion*, were to be stretch'd out, on some of these *Greek Tenters*.

Me—et, glo—ri—o—us, Oc—ca—si—on.

It is visible enough, the Verses are fill'd up, by Help of such a frightful *Anglo-Gracism*. But from what Force of *Custom* could we reconcile such *Jargon* to a *London Ear*? No Matter what Relief a lazy *Poet* might draw from it. It would never give his *Reader* Satisfaction. Yet, allow it but to be suppos'd, that *English* had been a *dead Language* for about a thousand Years, and now but studied, as a learn'd one, for the Sake of antient Stores of Knowledge, treasur'd up in its Remains, in That Case, even the manifest Absurdity above, as grossly as it seems to shock us, in a living Tongue, had pass'd, perhaps, unnotic'd, in the dead one, or but brush'd us, with a *faint* Perception.

But Peace be to the *Manes* of the *Greek*, and *Latin* Tongues! Their very Faults are venerable; from the early Prejudice, that roots a Reverence in us, for these first Imprinters of our School Ideas.—The modern Languages have no such Right to Preference; and their Defects may be observ'd more easily, and censur'd with less Danger.—*Tassone*, noting a most obvious one, in the *Italian* Poetry,

confesses, with a candid Freedom, that he knows not, whether to impute it most to the Ill Fortune of his Country's Writers, or a certain *Weakness* in the *Language*, which, says he, *wants Energy, and is unfit for high Expression*. This Defect, in That so favourite Tongue, which stands acknowleg'd, by their own Consent and Testimony, chiefly flows from a Redundancy of *Vowels*, which, tho' sweet'ning a soft Sound, *enervates* it.—*Italian* is the Language, wherein *Love* would chuse to sigh, or *Laughter* to be light, and wanton. It supplies, with Fulness and Delight, the Uses of Intrigue, and Conversation; but wants Weight and Spring for *Passion*, and bends under the Demand of *Comprehensiveness*. 'Tis like the flowing of soft Sand, in Hour-glasses: seeming liquid, while confin'd to its *close Currency*; but flies dispers'd, and opens its loose Quality, as soon as shaken out, and trusted to hard Weather.

Not to insist, in this Place, on the too offensive Frequency of their *Elisions*, I make Haste to note another, where the rash Condemners of our own Excess in *Monosyllables* will wonder, I find Cause to charge it. But I take their Poverty, in That Particular alone, to be the Reason, why *Italian Rhymes* induce a Kind of leaping Levity, upon the Terminations of their Verses. They run generally in *Stanzas*, the Rhymes *double*, and the Structure in this Order.

—	Capitano,
—	Christo.
—	Mano,
—	Acquistò.
—	Vano
—	Mistò.
—	Santi,
—	Erranti.

But disyllable, or trisyllable Rhymes, if I mistake not, carry with 'em something of the *Burlesque Air*; and suit more aptly with that grinning Face of Wit, that loves to wear *Grimace* upon *good Sense*, like *Hudibras*, than with the grave and serious Majesty, that ought to dignify the *Epic Poetry*.

Both these Defects are *French*, as visibly, as they must be confess'd *Italian*. But they find some Remedy in *France*, in that their Accent frequently is plac'd on the *last Syllable* of their long Words; and so their Rhymes appear to terminate more gravely, than *Italian* ones; which carry it upon their *last excepting one*. Take an Example of this best Kind of *French* accenting, from *Boileau*.

<i>Amours</i>	—	<i>Discours.</i>
<i>Uniforme</i>	—	<i>Endorme.</i>
<i>Ennuyer</i>	—	<i>Psalmodier.</i>
<i>Leſſeur</i>	—	<i>Achepteur.</i>

Here,

Here, All the Rhymes depend upon the terminating Syllable: But, yet they are not careful to preserve this Benefit; too frequently degenerating into *double Rhymes*, like the *Italians*, as in this, of the same *Boileau*.

De la Foy d'un Chrestien les Mystères terribles
D'Ornemens egayez ne sont point susceptibles.
Et de vos Fictions le Mélange coupable
Même à ses Veritez donne l'Air de la Fable.

I will *english* these four Lines, as near as I can do it, to the very *Trip* of the French *Cadence*; that the Reader may conceive a proper Notion of their *debonair Heroics*.

Of the Faith of a Christian the terrible Myst'ries
Reject the gay Dress of impertinent Hist'ries.
And the Fictions when mix'd, tho' as well as you're able,
To the pure Truth itself give the Air of a Fable.

I judge with a too partial Ear, or there is something so distastefully *alert* (to use a Phrase of their own furnishing) in the pert *Skipping*, of this Verse, a Kind of *Pause-check'd Recoil* of Motion, like the *Half whirl* of a Spinning-wheel,—like the *unlacing* of a *Muse*, as Mr. *Hobbes* expresses it, or, to hit the Image better, in *Lord Dorset's* Simile, like the unvaried *Rumbling of a Wheel-barrow*, that the Numbers of their serious Poems seem as ill-adapted to their Subjects, as *Jigg Tunes* to a *Church Anthem*.—We may discover, in their very Verse, the *dapper Genius* of their Nation: a Sort of spirited, or animal, Vivacity, that dances gaily thro' the Fancy, without stopping at the Judgment. I except their few Examples (which have been *by Nature too* excepted) of a fierce, yet steady, Fire, and a Reflection both *profound*, and *volatile*.

Concerning other modern Tongues, it will be needless to say much. What has been hinted, of *Italian*, will effectually include the *Spanish*, and the *Portuguese*; the *German* must be own'd worth great Regard for its Antiquity, and Manliness; but will content itself with That just Praise, and claim no Merit from its Harmony. Whatever Roughness *English* may be thought to have retain'd, is but of *Saxon Origin*; and, to acknowledge a too obvious Truth, Poetry in *High-Dutch*, is like the *Nile* among its *Cataracts*: It may be rapid, and deep; but 'tis tumbling, and terrible: It has its Course obstructed, every-where, by Mountains it must clamber over.—To carry Poetry still further North, would be but dragging her to seek for Friends, among her Enemies, the *Goths*, and *Vandals*.

The *English* then, of modern Tongues, is fitted best for Poetry. Its copious Choice of *Monosyllables* (which many have been rash enough to call a *Blemish*) make it strong, significant, and comprehensive. Its Derivatives, from *Greek* and *Latin*, have adorn'd it with Variety of Cadences; and intermix'd its masculine Excess of Consonants with a melodious Fluency, from interposing Vowels.—It adorns, and is adorn'd by, *Rhyme*; yet takes it in but as a Subject, not obeys it, as her Tyrant: It is grave, slow, stately, soft, swift, wanton, or majestic. It

has all the Lente of Complaint and Pity ; yet has all the Transport of excursive Energy : It is an inexhaustibly full Treasury, supplied from the selected Tributes of whatever was most excellent, in other Speeches ; but possesses them with so improv'd an Aptitude, as to have made *That* HONEY, which was raw Juice, in the Flowers It drew it from.

But I digress too far from what I had begun to say, upon the Structure of my Verse, which differs little from a Species, Mr. Cowley, toward the Close of the last Century, first reduc'd to Practice, and misnam'd *Pindaric* : But if he conceiv'd a Greek Name necessary, *Dithyrambic* had, I think, express'd his Purpose better. From the Latitude of so diversify'd a Numerosity, there must arise a fuller Harmony, than can consist with common Measure. Else, a Concert can be equall'd by a single Instrument : our usual Couplet-writing sooner satiates, by too frequent, and too limited Returns, of the same Measure. Whereas, in this perpetual Change of Cadence, and new Course of Numbers, the Attention is beat up, provok'd, and render'd lively ; the Ear, every-where, reliev'd ; and Images of Actions, Sounds, or Things, how different soever they may be, are cloath'd with Words, best suited to their Nature.

The Compass, and the Freedom of this Range of Verse, have recommended its Attempt to many Practisers in *Odes*, and such brief Sallies ; but, too generally, with bad Success : They check'd the Gracefulness of Stepping, by too visible a *Fear to fall*. Like Children, who, first learn to go alone, they took short, tottering Starts ; and hung upon, and rested at, All stopping Places, they could stretch their Hands to. They confin'd their Muse, too humbly, to a *Lyric* Length of Leading-strings : and gave the snug, set, round-head *Crop*, to Stanzas, that should flow out *cavalierly*. *Pindaric*, in short Measure, is a Woman of Quality, in Knee-deep Petticoats ; she may have very well-shap'd Feet : but they can never be so fine, as to atone the *Indecorum*. *Lyric* Numbers carry song-like and familiar Levity, quite inconsistent with the *Epic* Gravity. A few bold Writers of *Pindaric Odes* have ventur'd, now-and-then, as far as the *Hexameter* : but hardly dar'd so much as dream of the *Heptametrical* seven-footed Line, of fourteen Syllables : Indeed the shortest Measure is too long, unless That Length is fill'd with Meaning. For nothing can be more ridiculous, than a weak languishing Extent of Verse without proportion'd Vigour in the Sentiment : Such Verse plays loose, like some vast main Sail of a Ship, that flaps, and flutters heavily upon the Prospect of a Breeze, but presently falls back against the Mast, for want of *Wind*, to swell it into Energy. It is in Poems such as These, where, as was paintedly express'd by Mr. Pope (but might have been *still more so*, by his length'ning out his second Verse to the *Heptameter* Extent just mentioned, and hereunder given it by an Addition only of the *two* small Words, in *Roman Characters*)

A needless Alexandrine ends the Song :

And, like a (weak and) wounded Snake, drags its slow Length along.

Mr.

Mr. *Dryden*, who was willing enough to allow That Praise to Mr. *Cowley*, justly due to him for having introduc'd a new, and noble Way of Writing, is, however, of Opinion, that much still was wanting to his Practice, of That wish'd Perfection, which This Kind of Verse seem'd capable of. He instances the Roughness, and the oft-deficient Numbers: The Truth is, Mr. *Cowley's* Judgment, not his *Ear*, deceived him. What his learn'd, and Reverend Editor would represent, as an Effect of generous Negligence, in a too active Race of Fancy, seeming to have been the cool, and most deliberate Result of wrong Election: we may plainly gather This, from his own Note to the first Book of *Dauides*; where he speaks of This strange Line.

Nor can the Glory confine itself to the endless Space.

It was in his Intention, to express the Struggle of an overflowing Lustre, labouring for Room, in the whole Breadth of Heaven.—*I am sorry* (says Mr. *Cowley*) *that it is necessary to admonish the most Part of Readers, that it is not by Negligence, that this Verse is so loose, long, and, as it were, vast: It is to paint the Nature of the Thing, which it describes: which I would have observ'd in divers other Places, that else will pass for very careless Verses.* And then, he names these following.

Down a Precipice deep, down he casts them, All.

And This,

Like some fair Pine, o'erlooking all th' ignobler Wood.

Painting the Image, by the *Sound*, is, questionless, one of the liveliest Beauties, of which Verse is capable. But how far That is done, by *running out of Measure*, and admitting plain *Prose*, as an Ornament in *Poetry*, I leave to be determin'd by the Judgment of the Reader. He will recollect, that *Homer* was, and *Virgil* (in his Imitation) every-where, ambitious of this verbal colouring: but They neither of 'em thought it necessary to That End, to *disarray*, and *prossify* their Numbers. On the contrary, they rais'd, and added to, their Harmony, by a melodious Latitude, that circumscrib'd, at once, and dissipated, by Effect of this all-comprehending Practice. Mr. *Cowley* needed not have started out of *Numerosity*, to reach effectually the View before him.—For Example—

Nor finds the struggling Glory Room, close-press'd, o'er boundless Space.

For the Second,

Down o'er a Cliff's steep Precipice, deep down he casts 'em all.

For the Third,

O'erlooking, like some tow'ry Pine, th' ignobler Under-wood.

And here are three successive Instances, of the great Use and Benefit, an *English* Poet has it in his Power to make, by sparingly (and always *aptly*) daring to launch out, into the long *Heptameter* Extent of Measure. But there will be found too much *obstructive* VOID, in this poetic *Saul's* big Armour; if a *Dwarf*, in Genius, should attempt to wear it.

Mr. *Cowley's* Ear indulg'd him in another equally untuneful Practice, which (in Reverence to the never-failing strong Characteristic of the Tribe of Imitators) the *Implicites* in *His* Track have All, with devious Diligence, been careful not to start a Step from. He, too often, plac'd his *Pauses*, in the wrong Part of his Verse. They should, in the long Measures, be found always posited exactly. I subjoin an Instance of the Error.

Lo! how the Years to come, a num'rous and well-fitted Quire.

Here was nothing, that resembled *Numbers*: no Harmony at all, unless the Reader paus'd at *Nume* in the Word *numerous*: and if he *did* so pause, in that divided Word, he made a disagreeable *Hiatus*, in the *Sense*; and would have wounded a nice Ear, as harshly as an old *Greek Expletive*. How infinitely more majestically, flows the Verse hereunder, tho' the Measure is the same, and Both are Mr. *Cowley's*!—for no other Reason but, because the Pause is, here, plac'd rightly.

The Mountains shake and run about, no less confus'd than They.

Run about, indeed, may want a little of the purpos'd Greatness, from the too light *Vulgarity* of the Expression.—*Strive to fly*, had been, perhaps, more aptly suited to both Sound, and Image. But I introduce the Verse, in this Place, only with a View to the right placing of its Pause, so wrongly judg'd in the preceding one.

That noble Writer seems to have been sensible of the Perplexity, this Roughness of his Numbers, now-and-then, must throw a Reader into. For he gives a most exact Description of *Pindaric* Verse (as he then practis'd it) in his *Ode upon the Resurrection*.

'Tis an unruly, and a hard-mouth'd Horse,
 Fierce, and unbroken, yet:
 Impatient of the Spur, or Bit!
 Now, prances stately, and anon flies o'er the Place:
 Disdains the servile Law of any settled Pace.
 Conscious, and proud of his own natural Force,
 'Twill no unskilful Touch endure,
 But flings Writer and Reader, too, that sits not sure.

This was the true Condition under which he left it. But if he had liv'd to give the needful Hand to what he so successfully had introduc'd, 'tis probable, he would

would have so far chang'd his Practice, that it had been nearer describ'd, in *This*, from his fine *Ode*, on *Liberty*.

The plain Heroic Strain let others take,
 Mine the *Pindaric* Way I'll make;
 The Matter shall be grave, the Numbers loose, and free;
 It shall not keep one settled Pace of Time;
 In the same Tune, It shall not always chime:
 Nor shall each Verse, just to his Neighbour, rhyme.
 A thousand Liberties It shall dispense,
 But, yet, shall manage All, without Offence,
 Or to the Sweetness of the Sound, or Greatness of the Sense.

A Species, *once*, I think, was tried in *Tragic Poetry*, not wholly differing from this new *Composite Order*. *Aristotle* notes it of a Work of *Cheremon*, a Scholar of *Socrates*. The Piece was call'd the *Centaur*, and compos'd, he says, of *All the different Sorts of Verse*. He should have added, *except long ones*: For he disapproves That Practice, in *dramatic Works*, because *Iambics*, and *Tetrameters*, and such *SHORT Measures* were too skipping, and too light, for *serious Poetry*. Our Language carries natural Gravity, and might allow short Measures with less Lightness. Yet, they ought not to be often us'd, in *Epic Writings*, even of This new Sort: and never, but in Places, where they help the Harmony, without detracting from the Dignity.

That This Poem is divided into *Twelve Books*, was a Determination of so little Consequence, that 'twere impertinent to offer at a Reason for it. These are Points indifferent; and in which a Poet will not need to strengthen his own Practice by Examples. The Extent of his Design should be a Guide, in his Division of it. Mr. *Cowley* professedly imitated *Virgil*, in his Choice of Twelve Books, to his *Davideis*: tho', I think, he might as justly have rejected *Virgil's* Number, as He (*Virgil*) had rejected *Homer's*: The Number of whose *Books*, too, the *Roman* would, methinks, more gracefully have been a Borrower of, than of his *Episodes*, and *Incidents*.—Sir *William D'avenant* springs quite aside from this old imitative Road; but into an Extreme, as wrong, tho' opposite. He is for neither *Books*, nor *Proposition*, *Invocation*, or *Machinery*. Like some of those stiff-hearted *Puritans*, who dirtied his own Times, and would hear Sermons with their Hats upon their Heads, in Defiance of *Church Ceremony*. He divides his *Gondibert* into *Five Acts*, as if it were a *Tragedy*: and Each Act into *Cantos*, which may hold, he says, the Place of *Scenes*.—This Method Mr. *Hobbes*, in a long prefatory Tract, thought worth his Pains to justify; but was, I think, Himself, the sole Supporter of his Argument. In Matters left indifferent, the old Way, if not *best*, is sure to be the *modestest*. For my Part, if Division into Twelve Books needs more Reason than, because the Subject offer'd Matter, for That Number, I should think it fully justified, from the Division of That People, whom

whom it treats of, into their *Twelve Tribes*: If still a stronger Reason should be ask'd for, take it *thus*. The Action of an *Epic Poem* ought not to be stretch'd beyond one Year; and *Twelve Months* make up the Division of the Term, so limited.—And now I enter on the *Referential Notes*, in Every Section mark'd progressively.

Sect. I. L. 2.—*Seek, O Soul! some Heavenly Theme.*

It was the Custom of *Greek Poets* to mix in one the *Proposition* and the *Invocation*. The *Latins* (and the *Moderns*, mostly, follow them) propos'd their Subject first, and then invoc'd Assistance from the *Muses*.—It becomes a *Christian Poet* better, to begin with *Invocation*. It is a Way more solemn, and proportion'd to the Weight of an Address to *our Inspirer*, not alone to pray his Aid in the Performance, but his previous Guidance in the very Choice of what we go upon.—That *Invocation* should, by no means, be omitted, seems a Point agreed, for many different Reasons. A Work, that has its first Foundation in a Moral Purpose, owes a Reader (says *Bosfu*) a good Example, for his Piety and Veneration. Add, that many Things must be describ'd, in Course of these Great Poems, which the Poet not being thought in any reasonable Likelihood of coming to so full a Knowledge of, by any common Means of Information, He could never hope to give his Testimony Weight enough to merit *Faith*, but from impressing, first, his Reader's Mind, with a Conceit, that Heaven infus'd it.—Sir *William D'Avenant*, then, did ill, to throw aside his *Prophet's Mantle*. What the *Robe* is to the *Judge*, the Poet owes to *Invocation*.

Sect. I. L. 18.—*Redeem the Use of long-lost Poetry.*

Every body knows, that the Original of Poetry was in *the Worship of the Gods*, and Celebration of their Glory. It is equally notorious, how degenerate It is, since, become in its too *beggarly Flattery* (as Mr. *Cowley* calls it) of Great Men. He adds, in *idolizing Women*; which last Observation, to discredit Gallantry He was so fitted for, and so excusable for painting, I would certainly have let alone, had I been Author of his *MISTRESS*.—To *redeem the Use of Poetry*, then, is to restore it to the *Praise of God*, to the Advancement of true *Virtue*, and to Animation of those noblest *Passions*, which lend Wings to human Ardour.

Sect. II. L. 4.—*Wilful, they started from protective Grace.*

Among the many Arguments enforc'd by *Democratic Writers*, against *Monarchy*, It seems the most immodest one, and the least founded upon Reason, when they are for Lifting *God Himself* into *Their Party*! From what Appearance they deriv'd this Claim, it is not easy to discover: since the *Unity of Power*

ascribed to the Almighty, by Themselves, as well as their Opponents, does not seem, at all, to favour any Preference, of the remotest Form of Government on *Earth*, from That which *Heaven* is rul'd by. Yet there runs no Principle, more universally asserted, through the Writings of the warm Enthusiasts of the last unquiet Century, than, that God declared Himself aloud for the Republican System, by his personal Command to *Moses*, for prescribing *That selected Form* to his own chosen Race of People: For they insist, that the *Mosaic Model* was a *Popular* one. They hold it, too, a Claim assigned them with so full a Right to their *political Free-will*, that God submitted Laws, and Propositions, to the People's Confirmation, or Refusal: and became the *Civil Magistrate* of their *Theocracy*. That, when accordingly they found it proper to DEPOSE Him from his temporal Authority (I use the very Word, which *Oceana*, and many other of their Treatises, take Boldness to make free with) and to chuse Themselves a King, who should reign *with* them, in His Stead, God blam'd but their *Ingratitude*, confessing, and admitting, their asserted *Right*, (to *Samuel*)—*It is not Thee they have rejected; but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them*; and, that what is meant by *giving them a King* IN WRATH, was a Reproach, that they inclin'd to chuse a *King at all*, and so, but consequential Menace, that Their Monarch should enslave 'em, into a corrected Sense of That superior Happiness, they parted with, in Favour of him.

This still continuing to be the Light, wherein they see That *Hebrew Revolution*, 'twill be pulling down one Prop of their political Fabric, to make plain, in Course of these Reflections, that the Government of *Israel*, as assign'd by God, was *not* a Commonwealth, but an *Hereditary Monarchy*: and that All the *Hebrew's* Miseries, in those successive Slaveries they fell into, for three hundred Years together, were a natural Effect of Factions, and Confusions, which the *Princes* of their *Tribes* became divided by, upon assuming to Themselves, in their provincial Severalties, a secular Direction of the *military Power*, which, in their first Institution, was the *Sovereign's Prerogative, exclusively*; together with a Right of *Judicatory* in the last Appeal on *Civil Causes*: only reserving to the Popular *Assent* or *Dissent* the Election, or Rejection of new Laws, originally to be brought before the *Congregation*, and *enacted* by and with the People's Approbation, and the *Regal Fiat*, of the Sovereign Authority.

I propose to leave it undeniable, that This Sovereign Power was vested in the *High Priest*, personally, and that *Moses* plac'd it, not in *his* defective Line, but, in his BROTHER's, who had many *Children*; down, successively, to whom, descended the *Monarchic*, with the *Sacerdotal*, sole Supremacy; and form'd That Species of Administration, call'd *Theocracy*, not to be understood, as if God, in his own immediate Person, condescended to be *King in Israel*; but as assisting with his *influential Presence*, always virtually (and sometimes openly, and miraculously), to inspire, and actuate, the High Priest's Determinations. I pretend to make this System clear, in all its Branches, and to reconcile to it the whole Gradation of Events, to That destructive Period under *Saul*, at which Time,
first,

first, the *Priestly* Power became *subordinate* to, and dependent on, the *temporal* Royalty: as in the other Eastern Nations, that lay nearest to 'em.

It may merit Recollection, that the *Papal* Claim to an *Infallibility*, in *Christian Spirituals*, has sometimes made such near Approach to take in *temporal Supremacy conjunctively*, as in no very wide Degree to hold Itself remov'd from Prospect of a *new Theocracy*. And nearer still was That, of the old *Caliph's* Claim, in the *Mahometan* first Outstart of *Enthusiasm*.

Sect. II. L. 10.—*Then* GIDEON, *wise, and generous Leader, rose.*

This Line begins the PROPOSITION, (and the Progress of the Section specifies the ACTION, of the Poem.)—In its Opening, it is *general*—to teach, in the Example of the Leader nam'd, that the Inspir'd by Heaven are to apprehend no Danger, from the most unequal Opposition: all *divided* Power becoming weaker, on Exertion; while *united* moves *direct*, and still grows stronger, in That Motion. The Proposition next descends to the *particular*: declaring it to be the *Redemption of Israel*, from her Yoke of foreign Conquest.

It is a terrible Dust, the *Critics* raise, in their Disputes, concerning the best Way of opening Propositions. Every body agrees, with them, in recommending *Modesty*: but *Fulness*, too, seems not at all unnecessary.—I can be as unsatisfied with *Statius*, as *Bossu* has been, for his encumb'ring the Proposition of his *Achilleid* with Declarations, *that his Hero had frighted the Thunderer*: as also with his personal Boasts, how nobly He (the Poet) had *exhausted Inspiration*; inasmuch, that *Thebes*, so sung by *Him*, should reverence him, as her *second Founder*. In a just Dislike of This, All Men, of common Sense, must join; but, from Effect of the same Sense, they ought to quit his Cause (I mean *Bossu's*), when undiscerningly attach'd to every casual Choice, of *Homer*, or of *Virgil*, he deduces an Authority to state *Their* Practice, as a not to be disputed Standard for All *Epic* Plans to follow.

There is a celebrated *Ipse dixit*, which has been too long consented to, upon this very Subject, of the *Proposition*, and which it is now high Time to weigh, and find too light, even after I confess it *Horace's*. If I have any Notion, what it is he means, He either has meant evidently wrong, or (which 'twere bolder to suspect him guilty of) has *mis-express'd* his own true Meaning.—hear him, in *Lord Roscommon*.

Do not begin, as That old Scribler did,
Priam's proud War, and Fate, I mean to sing.
What, worth such Noise, produc'd this bellowing Bard!
How much more just spoke *Homer*, always wise!
Muse, paint the Man, who, after Troys great Fall,
Manners, and *Men*, and num'rous *Cities* saw!
Not Smoke from Fire, but Fire from Smoke, HE draws,

And

And from *This Flat*, to dreadful Wonders tow'rs:
To barking *Scyllas*, *Cyclops*, and *Charybdis*!

In the first Place, I can see no Reason, why, because One Man has undertaken to describe a War, and prov'd not equal to his Enterprize, Another therefore should be *arrogant*, in but proposing the same Subject. And, as to *Modesty* of Proposition, for the want of which the Writer is here treated ill by *Horace*, and accus'd of *Noise*, and *Ostentation*, I am frank enough to dare confess, that the *Immodesty*, if there is Any here, lies too conceal'd for my Discernment. Pray, what could any Author, who design'd That Subject, have contriv'd to say upon it, *less*, when he was entering on the Proposition of it? Where is the too much *Fire* in his Beginning? Smoke in the Progress can be nothing to our Purpose: why is there more of *Pomp* express'd, or why more Expectation rais'd, from a plain Promise to describe the Ruin of *one Town*, and Death of *one Man*, than to shew the *Manners* of *many Men*, and treat on the Affairs of *many Cities*? If we were not to expect Accounts, of not alone the Things *Ulysses* saw, but also *why* he saw them, to what End then did *Homer* promise any thing about 'em, in his Proposition? If we were to entertain That Expectation, certainly our Hopes are higher rais'd by *Homer*, who assures us, we shall hear of many Cities, and of many Men, than by the *other*, who propos'd to set before us but the Ruin of one City, and one Man's Destruction.

There is a *Narrowness* in these implicit Reverencers. They understand, and follow in their Author's Rear, with a too creeping, and too blind Servility. Who reads, and is not *Horace's* Admirer? and yet, *who* shall be afraid of saying, He would better have instructed us, by some intelligible plain Precept, on this Point, of *Propositions*, than by Two ill-understood, and wide Examples?—To conclude with my own humble Notion of the Matter, He certainly proposes well, who comprehends within his Proposition, the Extent of his whole Meaning, and adds nothing further: And *He errs*, as certainly, who, being scrupulously terrified, by Words without a Reason, is kept back by groundless Fear of saying more, than This or That Man would have said upon the Subject, and says *less*, than his own Meaning calls for.

Sect. III. L. 11.—*Not to Pride's transient Phantoms poorly kneel.*

I would not be misunderstood, in this Place, as renouncing Reverence for the Age, I live in, or for Any Great Man, who adorns it. (I except all such, whose *Minds* are no Partakers in their *Greatness*.) What I mean by my unfashionable, and not over-politic, *Abjuration*, is no more, than that I blush to find, it is not thought below the Condescension of a Man of Genius, to confine his Views to little Hopes, and transient Interests from the Powerful: His Business, as I take it, being rather, to assert, and vindicate, *neglected Excellence*, than to be poorly prostituting his *Hofannah*, to the HIGHEST. The Poet, and the Priest (Antiquity

so join'd 'em) ought to guide their Ends, *not*, by the Humours, Inclinations, or immediate Passions, of the Age, they write in. They should carry down their Prospect through *Futurity*, and never rate their Recompence at all the lower, from their *Person's* being doom'd to *die*, before it reaches 'em.

Sect. VII. L. 2.—*Had restless Midian pour'd her swarthy Hosts.*

What People these *Midianites* were, into what Nations divided, how govern'd, and where seated, as also who are now their Descendents, I shall have Occasion to describe in the next Book. This Race had wasted *Israel*, for seven Years; within the last of which, about the Time of Harvest, the Poem takes Beginning: that so, the Unity of Action might be properly maintain'd, in comprehending only their Redemption, without Retrospect to their Invasion; which had form'd *Two* different Actions, and destroy'd the Regularity, requir'd in *Epic Poetry*. Critics believe they see, that for this Reason only, *Homer* commenc'd his *Iliad*, in the tenth Year of the Siege, and *Virgil* his *Aeneid* in the last Year of the Voyage. No doubt, they had been, else, incumber'd by Excess of Matter.

Sect. VII. L. 5.—*To These old Amalek her Standards join'd.*

This numerous and mighty Nation will have Place at large, among the Notes of the succeeding Book. They were the *Hebrew's* first and surest Enemies: *First*, because, *They*, first, attack'd 'em, in their March; when they were *beaten*, under *Moses*.—And *surest*, as the *Israelites* receiv'd particular Command from God, never to make Peace with the *Amalekites*, but pursue, till they had quite eradicated them. And this, at last, they very nearly had accomplish'd, after many hundred Years were past, first. What, in this Affair, I find least comprehensible, is, God's remembring, for a People, who Themselves had long forgot, this Right to Vengeance. They appear to have deserv'd it very little: it being *after* their *Rejection* of His Care concerning them. I am at some Loss, therefore, to account for the surprizing Rigour of the Curse denounc'd on *Saul*, by *Samuel*, three hundred and fifty Years after the Injury receiv'd: in Punishment of but a generous *Pity*, shewn to *Agag*, when his Prisoner. As the Compassion was a Virtue, and 'twere hard, to think the *Prophet's* Love of *Vengeance* keener than the *King's*, the Anger could arise but from a Recollection, that such Mercy, shewn to *Amalek*, was a Contempt express'd, of *Heaven*: there standing out an un-repeal'd Decree, for total Extirpation of That People.

Sect. VII. L. 17.—*Their heavy Harvests load the plund'ring Foe.*

From the Story of this War, as in the Book of *Judges*, It was predatory, and incurfive: and the *Hebrews*, after their first Contest, had abandon'd all the Plains, and open Country, and secur'd themselves among their Fastnesses, on rocky Mountains:

Mountains: while the Enemy, maintaining Winter Quarters in some Cities, which they held on Purpose, made Excursions thence, in Summer, to destroy the Harvest, burn the open Towns, and Villages, and carry off (as Plunder) People, Cattle, and whatever else fell into their Possession.

Sect. VIII. L. 2.—*Where Half the MANASSÆAN Tribe, &c.*

Jordan, that rises in the northern Part of *Palestine*, runs, almost strait South, through the whole Length of the Country; nine Tribes, and a Half, of the Twelve, in the Division made by *Joshua*, of the conquer'd Lands, had been allotted the Possession of That Tract, between the western Shore of *Jordan*, and the Neck of the *Levant*, or *Syrian Sea*: excepting only, that the Coast Itself, together with a Breadth of some Miles inward, was possess'd by the *Philistines*, and the rich, and powerful trading States of *Tyre*, and *Sidon*. The other two Tribes and a Half, being Those of *Reuben*, *Gad*, and one Half of *Manassab*, held the Country, lying Eastward along *Jordan*, which was conquer'd, first of All, by *Moses*, from the *Amorites*, and their Allies. But That Half Tribe of the *Manassans*, which is here alluded to, had their Allotment to the West of *Jordan*. It was a long, but narrow, Slip of Land, which trended, from the River's Brink, 'twixt *Iffachar*, and *Ephraim*, almost to the Sea Coast abovemention'd. On a Mountain, toward the East End of this Slip of Land, in Sight of *Jordan*, stood the City of *Ophra* (*Gideon's* Birth-place), safe from Insults of an Enemy, by its impregnable Situation. At the Foot of this high Mountain, open'd a large, beautiful, and fruitful Valley, That of *Jezreel*; where the *Midian* Army is suppos'd to lie encamp'd at This Time, whence the Poem takes Beginning. This Valley of *Jezreel* has been the Scene of many bloody Battles. It was there, our *Gideon* overthrew the *Midianites*, *Saul*, the *Philistines*: *Achab* the *Syrians*; And, in more modern Times, the *Tartars* the *Saracens*.

Sect. VIII. L. 23.—*This Tree a Shade o'er half the Mountain cast.*

That there was a Tree, and a Bench under it, before *Joash's* House, we have the Testimony of the Bible, which informs us, that an *Angel of God* came, and sat there: but, that it was so large, and old a Tree, is a poetical Discovery. That it was remarkable however for its Size, and Situation, may be gather'd, from its being thought worth so particular a Notice in the *sacred Story*. But, because I have suppos'd it *many Ages old*, and yet in its full Flourish, It is necessary, I say something, in Defence, and Honour of these venerable Children of the Earth.

Pliny tells us of *Oaks*, growing in his Time, suppos'd to have been coeval with the *World Itself*. Their Roots, says he, were united, and rais'd into Arches, like the Gates of Cities; and the Earth was swell'd, about 'em, into Mountains.—*Josephus* has made Mention of a Turpentine Tree, that was thought as old as the Creation. Mr. *Maundrel*, in his Journey to *Jerusalem*, affirms, He measur'd one

of the Few yet remaining *Cedars of Lebanon*, and found it above twelve Yards round the Body: and that, at almost one hundred Foot high, It spread out into five several Limbs, the least of which would have been singly a great *Tree*.—Sir *Francis Drake* informs us, that he measur'd a huge *Mastic-Tree*, in one of his Voyages, that was *four and thirty Yards about*! It is easy to infer, These vegetable Giants must have borne the Growth of no small Number of Ages.—St. *Jerom*, too, relates, that he had seen the very *Sycamore Tree*, *Zacchæus* climb'd into to look upon our *Saviour*, when he rode in Triumph to *Jerusalem*.—But the *Tree of Trees*, at last, is an old *English Dryad*: one that Mr. *Evelyn*, in his *Sylva*, mentions, with becoming *Gravity*; and hands down to us the Record of such a *Magna Charta* in its Reverence, as deserves to be remember'd, and maintain'd, to an immortal Length of Triumph. And no Doubt, It *will be so*, by those bold Sons of Liberty, who boast the Honour of their Birth within *due Distance* of its Shadow. The abovenam'd Gentleman asserts, from his own Knowledge, that there is This pleasant Kind of Privilege annex'd to an old *Oak*, which has, Time out of Memory, been the Glory of *Knoll Wood, near Trely Castle, in Staffordshire*: The Shade of This Tree's Boughs, he says, is very ample; and, in due Respect to its Antiquity, whoever will make Oath, on Birth of any Child who must call nobody Its Father, that This Child was actually begotten *within any Part of Its Shadow*, the Offence is free, and stands exempted from all Cognizance, whether of civil, or ecclesiastic Magistrate.—But, to return to the Longevity of Trees, undignified by so indulg'd a *Sanctuary*, Mr. *Lawson*, in his Tract of *Orchards*, has brought reasonable Arguments to prove, a *Pear-Tree's* Life may be a *thousand Years*. And truly, if the Age of *Man*, before the Flood, was from Six hundred to Nine hundred Years, it can be no great Rashness to imagine, that an *Oak*, so much more durable, and solid, in its Substance, and not subject to the Dangers and Diseases, which disorder human Bodies, may be capable of living many thousand Years; the Soil suppos'd *adapted*, and no Accident arising, that might interrupt, or stop its Progress.—And thus much I thought it not amiss to note, in Reference to the Age I have assign'd the *Oak of Gideon*.

Sect. IX. L. 1.—*The Morning rising over Israel's Spoils.*

The Description, which this Verse begins, I took some Pains to make a pleasing one; but would not have it thought, I introduc'd it, to make Way for Ornament.—Not but *Description* is the *Life* of Epic Poetry; and it is There (as *Boileau* well observes) the Poet ought to lavish all his Fancy, and his Rhetoric; yet, if it serves no other End than mere *Delight*, the Poem will be found to languish; for, the Race of *Action* is too coldly stopp'd, in Favour of *detach'd Ideas*. Bossu writes much, to say a very little to the Purpose, in his Chapter of *Descriptions*: Mr. *Dennis* is more clear, and hits the Point directly, in one short Remark of his Discourse against *Prince Arthur*. *Descriptions*, says this Gentleman,

man, ought never to be made, in *Epic Poems*, unless necessary; which they never can be, but in one of these two Cases; either where of Use, for giving us a reasonable Account of some Part of the Action, whereby to make it probable; or when they serve to imprint strongly some important Circumstance.

It is in this last View, that the Description of the Morning, dawning over *Gideon*, shadow'd by his Oak, was introduc'd, in order to impress a strong Conception, not of the Place and Posture simply, but of all the hostile Prospect opening before him, to convey a local Image, and transmit the Sense of Danger, and of his Reflections on it, from the *Hero's*, to the *Reader's*, Passions, as we see in common Life how forcibly Regards of Place assist Imagination. He, who had seen *Edge Hill*, or *Newberry*, or *Naseby*, would have found himself more strikingly attach'd, in reading the Accounts, our History records of those three Battles.

Sect. X. L. 12.—*Here and there, high-mettled Steeds.*

The Use I make of *Horse*, in the Progression of this War, being frequent, and considerable, I take Occasion, from their first being mention'd, in this Verse, to assert the Use of *Cavalry* among the *Hebrews*, lest some hasty *Doubt*, perhaps, might censure it, as not in Practice, in That early Period. And the rather, because *Homer*, writing of a War much later, makes no Mention in His Work of *Horsemen*: but describes That noble Creature in no other Manner, than as harness'd to the skirmishing little *Chariots*, of his *Greek* or *Trojan* Captains.—How this happen'd in the *Iliad* I am not able to account for: tho', that his Countrymen were then unskillful to back *Horses*, I can easily enough believe, because, not long before, they had mistaken the first *Horsemen* they had ever seen for compound Creatures, Half-Man Half-Horse, and given 'em the Name of *Centaurs*: from the Business they seem'd fondest of, which was, to steal their *Cattle*. But, that such, too, should have been the Case among the *Trojans*, must not be so readily admitted. *Troy* held the Empire, then, of *Asia Minor*, and drew powerful Allies to her Assistance, from so many distant Places, that it is impossible to fancy, they were All unskill'd in *Riding*; when so many Ages before That, the Wars all over *Asia* had been dreadfully distinguishable for the Number of their *Cavalry*—*Ninus*, the Founder of *Nineveh*, had enter'd *Bactria* with Two hundred thousand *Horse*, besides his *Chariots*; which were above a Hundred thousand; *Semiramis*, his Wife, who was the Builder of *Babylon*, invaded *India* (says *Suidas*) with a Million of *Horsemen*: and of *Chariots* arm'd with *Scyths* at the End of their Axle-trees, above a Hundred thousand, also.

It may be surmis'd, that *Horsemen* in such Numbers, in those early Ages, probably were over-rated by the Inaccuracy of Historians: Let it be so; It has no Force against the Use of *Horse* in War, so antiently.—If, therefore, the *Assyrians* thus abounded in their *Cavalry*, It must be past Dispute, that bordering Nations also had the Use of 'em: and cou'd not have come so far with Purpose to invade the

the *Hebrews*, without bringing Numbers, in their Armies.—As for the *Hebrews* Themselves, *Scripture* is full of Instances, how early They were able *Horsemen*: and it had been strange, indeed, to find them otherwise, when we remember they came out of *Egypt*: where the *Pharaohs* were so generally powerful, in Arms, and so particularly furnish'd with fine *Cavalry*, that One of 'em pursued the *Hebrew* People, in their March to the *Red Sea*, with *Fifty thousand Horse* (says *Josephus*) and Two hundred thousand Foot; besides all the *Chariots*, of *Egypt*.

Sect. X. L. 14.—*In other Parts, the Scyth-arm'd Chariots driv'n.*

Concerning these Chariots, an antient and terrible Invention, and of infinite Effect, in those vast open *Plains*, of *Asia*, the most proper Place to speak, at large, will be in the Remarks upon the second Book: and, there, a full Description will be found, not only of the Chariots Themselves, but of the different Ways of using, and avoiding them; and what Effects they did produce; and might have been made capable of producing.

Sect. X. L. 22.—*The tortur'd Drums, and sprightly Trumpets join'd.*

The Antients made great Use of *Drums*; though differing, in Shape, and Mode of beating, from the Ways in modern Practice. They were not struck upon by *Sticks*; but with strong Pulsion of the Hands alone, and both at Top and Bottom; being ornamented, round their Rims, with thick-set Plates of jingling Brass.—And certainly, such Drums must have deriv'd their Use from the most early Times; having been found with the *Chinese*, when first discover'd by the *Europeans*. And, for the *Trumpet*, there are such concurring Proofs of its Antiquity, in *Holy Writ*, that I was much surpriz'd at Mr. *Pope's* Assertion, in his Notes on *Homer*, that it was not yet invented, in the *Trojan War*! That War was in the Time of *Abdon's* judging *Israel*; and Trumpets were so long before in Use among the *Hebrews*, that the *Ark* was never mov'd, nor any Congregation summon'd, but by the Sound of this known Instrument. They had a Festival, too, call'd the Feast of *Trumpets*. The Walls of *Jericho* fell down, at Sound of *Joshua's Trumpets*. *Gideon* blew a *Trumpet*, and All *Abiezzer* was gather'd after him. *Moses*, in the very Wilderness, directs the making Silver *Trumpets*, whose Shape, and Dimensions suit exactly with Those, now, among us.—How has Mr. *Pope* then form'd this Notion, that they knew no Use of Trumpets in the *Trojan War*? Was it, because he found it not in *Homer*? Possibly his *Greeks* were, yet, too rude to have acquir'd the Practice in their Armies. Possibly they held it too inspiring, and exciting: as we read, that some of their vain Countrymen (the *Lacedemonians*) rejected it, long after, as a Stirrer up of Courage: which, it seems, they had a mind to represent, as naturally over-active, in their Constitution.—Therefore, march'd to Battles with the soft appeasing Sound of *Flutes* and *Flagelets*, before 'em: They would induce their Enemies to think, They rather found it needful to correct the overboiling

overboiling of their Ardour, than propel and irritate it. *Virgil*, however, gives *Æneas* a Trumpeter; and says, He had, before, belong'd to *Hector*: *Virgil*, therefore, thought the Trumpet was of That Antiquity: and, out of all Dispute, It was of older Origin.

Sect. XI. L. 1.—*Light, from his Bench, enrag'd, young Gideon leapt.*

From *design'd* Effect of those fine Prospects, which lay stretch'd before him: For the natural, and improv'd Embellishments of such a fruitful Valley, when survey'd together with the Enemy, whose Rapine held it from the famish'd Owners, must inflame the Spirit of a suffering Observer, into aggravated Sense of what he felt, and apprehended, for his Country. The natural Consequence of such a Flame, in such a Mind as *Gideon's*, was the rousing all those Passions, which break out in his Soliloquy:—and serve to open his true *Character*: the Reader being, yet, a Stranger to it: and It must have touch'd him in a fainter, and less animating Manner, had It been, in a cool Form of *Narrative*, anticipated to him.

Sect. XI. L. 24.—*Now, were some single Pow'r a gen'ral Blifs.*

The *Hebrews*, after *Joshua* was dead, concluded only a slight War, of little Consequence, in the South Parts of *Judab*, during the Reign of *Phinebas*; and then, with one concurrent Lapse from any further Application to their instituted Modes of military Practice under general Attachment to *dependent Regulation*, threw That Care, in a *divided* Trust, to their provincial Heads of Tribes: who, now, had their allotted *Severalties*, in Territory, and in Civil, and *Palatinate* Pretensions: and fell in with the whole People's Disposition to improve, and cultivate their *Lands*; drinking (as the Text expresses this Desertion of the Public Duty, for the private Interest) *Every Man under his own Vine, and eating under his own Fig-tree.*

This universal Spirit of Defection met too little Opposition, from a Want of due Attention in their *priestly Sovereigns*, to the *Civil* Branch of their Prerogative, and of the *Military* still more willingly; as from their Turn of Education, less adapted to its Duties. They depended on the awful Influence of their divine Pre-eminence, and their Possession of the *Ark of God*, whereto lay All Appeals, and to whose final Sentence, in the *High Priest's* Voice, the People were injoin'd implicit, and direct, Obedience, under Penalty of *present Death, by stoning*; so, they took no Care to educate some martial Genius (such as *Joshua's* had been), and to *attach him, by his Interest*, to sole Dependence on the Royal Safety: under whose delegated Right to That Supremacy in warlike Exercise, the Tribes had been, till then, enur'd, and disciplin'd, and held unitedly together.

The Knot had long been loosening; but Love of Ease, and Taste of Luxury, now all at once dissolv'd it.—Till this fatal Lure, in their detach'd Divisions of the *Land*, the Want of Property among Particulars sustain'd no other than the
general

general Interest. Hope of the *future*, from the State's Prosperity, kept every Individual Easy in his *present* Indigency: The joint Distress of their collective Body held it close compacted, like a Heap of Pebbles, in a watry Soil, froze hard together: The new Warmth of Self-dependency, dissolving the Adhesion, Every Off-falling Pebble became a *separate Body*, and contributed no longer to the Texture of the *Universal*. In this dispers'd Condition, what, before, had been *immoveable*, by virtue of its *Weight*, lay liable, thenceforth, to be trod down by every Hoof; and only magnified its Breadth, to ruin its Consistency.

Plenty in Ease was the first Step toward Anarchy: It drew on Disregard of public Happiness: The next was Wealth with Luxury; to which succeeded Pride; and That, in natural Consequence, produc'd Contempt of Law; soon follow'd by Defiance of Authority. The sure Result of All together was Dissension, and Confusion.—Turbulent Ambition set up Every *Tribe* to wish, and act, with views to Independency; and under this relax'd Insensibility to National Coherence, the Remainder of the *Canaanites* (whom Avarice, not Mercy, had too indiscretely spar'd) took Arms against so visible a Weakness; and succeeded frequently in their Revolts: till they not only brought this factious People to the lowest Pitch of Infamy, but taught the Nations, that surrounded 'em, to think of, and to treat 'em, with *Contempt*: than which no State can possibly be curs'd with an unhappier, or more dangerous, Condition.

The Progress of all This was natural.—It help'd 'em little, that they still had Strength enough, to have repuls'd their Enemies. The *Feet* and *Arms*, like Those in the Old Fable, of *Menenius Agrippa*, thought it hard, that they should work to feed the *Stomach*: and destroy'd themselves in not sustaining, what they were *sustain'd by*.—While those proud *Hebrews* multiplied their Claims into lean *Independencies*, *Exemptions*, and *Immunities*, they were pluck'd, One by One, away, like the Hairs of *Sertorius's Horse-Tail*, which if pull'd at, *All together*, had been found irradicable.—It is in Bodies Politic the same, as in a Body Natural: In the Rapidity of some wild Race, a Man perceives a gaping *Pit*, before him; what a Happiness, in such a Case, to have the Seat of Counsel, and of Power, the same! He sees the Ruin in the Moment, that he shuns it in; for, Reason and Authority, concurring in the Head, put present Stop to the retracted Members; and they stand *secur'd*, upon the very Verge of their Precipitation. But, could we here suppose our Limbs stuck over with fine *Mouths* and *Eyes*, like *Virgil's Fame*, and the imaginary *Argus*, and that every Mouth, and Eye, because it look'd a little like a *Face*, would set up for a *Head* too, and lay Claim to Privilege of Contradiction; what Consequence could we expect to see, from such a *Popular Balance*? Clamour, more than enough, there could not fail to be, to give *Alarm* to such a Body; but the Monster's *Neck* would run the Hazard to be broke, before each Member could be ask'd his Sentiment. There could not well be fancied a more lively Emblem, than, when Reasoners for Monarchy compare a Commonwealth to That imaginary Serpent, some old Writers dreamt of, with seven Heads, and but one Tail. The turbulent Reptile would, in spite of its big Hissing, only hang

hang itself in every Hedge: whereas, with but one Head, It would draw all its seven Tails *through*, and find no Danger, or Incumbrance.

Sect. 13. L. 4.—*How comes it He permits my Country's Shame?*

The leading Character, in Epic Poetry, must be distinguish'd, not alone from other Characters of the same Poem, but from other Poem's Heroes. He is to be mark'd by some *Peculiar*, of a noble Kind, by which He would be *known* in every Company; not only as a brave, wise, glorious Man:—but as That very individual brave, wise, glorious, Man.—We are not satisfied by a too general Description, even of a fine Woman; but we listen with full-pointed Approbation, when, besides the Attributes, She holds in Common with the other Beauties, of her Sex, we are brought closer to her Image, by Communication of some one Peculiar Grace, that teaches, and *appropriates*, HER separate Manner of *engaging*. Then, we form her, to our Fancy; and become acquainted with her Picture.—Thus, in *Virgil's* Hero, the Characteristic is *benevolent Piety*. In *Homer's*, It is *Fierceness*: and in *Gideon*, *Patriotism*.

Sect. XIII. L. last.—*Will Israel's haughty Tribes be led, &c.*

No Observation can be juster than is That, of the Political Writers, that *Authority* is POWER; and *Reputation* is AUTHORITY. The Nature of Things, and Actions, can be examin'd but by few: their Appearance reaches *Many*. *Machiavel* had Reason for his Observation, that *the only Difficulty in Ascent to Greatness will be found at its Beginning*. Never Man (says he) attain'd considerable Height, from low Condition, without infinite Fatigue, and Danger from Opponents. Repose a Milstone on the *very Border* of a Hill; It there lies fix'd for ever, if it wants the Impulse of some new *first Motion*. Let That *Push* be given, and not a *Rock*, in its Descent, will have the Strength to stop its Progress. All That *Envy*, which impels our Opposition, when we cross the Way of some new *Riser*, (from the natural Stimulation of a Vanity, that makes Comparison betwixt a Consciousness of our *own* Worth and *His*) becomes extinguish'd, in Amazement, when we contemplate the *Hazards*, of some terrible Reputation. The Honours, of a Man so dangerously rais'd, we can no longer look upon with Malice: we surrender 'em, as but the *Perquisites* of the advent'rous Post, he won 'em in: and while Everybody *admires, applauds, expects*,—Resistance is discourag'd, and falls in with Furtherance; till, now, the Man, whom All *believe* most capable, *grows capable*, in Consequence of that Admission.

However equal, therefore, *Gideon* might, in Nature, have been form'd, for Prosecution of his Purpose, as to his unnoted and self-reap'd Advantages, from Meditation, Study, Virtue, Observation, Courage, or Experience, It had been to disregard the common Course of Things, had I made slight of those Restraints, which heap up Mountains upon Mountains to raise *Bars* against *unaided Merit*.

I durst not, under this Conviction, dream his Virtue *rash* enough to have presum'd a Glory, so unlikely, and remote from his suppos'd Pretensions (wanting Power, Authority, and Reputation) till the GOD, who had inspir'd him with adapted Qualities, impell'd 'em also into Action by *Impression supernatural*; or, to take the Story in its literal Sense, by the *Appearance of an Angel*, to encourage him.

Sect. XVI. L. 1.—*Be taught, reply'd th' unbody'd Guest, &c.*

Gideon distrusts the Reality of so improbable a Charge, tho' seemingly deriv'd from Heaven, because the Vastness of its Depth was more than he could *sound*, by the short Line of human Reason. The Celestial Missionary discern'd this natural Struggle betwixt *Faith* and *Forefight*, and removes it, by a *Document*, included in, and made impressiv'e by a MIRACLE.—*Reach me* (said the Angel) *yon neglected little Store of your last Night's Provision.* *Gideon*, in mere Respect to the Command, complies with it, in Doubt, and Wonder at its Meaning: and That Doubt and Wonder gave Occasion to the Angel to *enforce* the Credit of his Errand, and exact the like implicit Reverence to it, without bold Examinations of its human Probability. I take the Liberty to look on This, as the true Meaning of the Passage in the *Text*: For, certainly, it could not be consistent with the Dignity of an Ambassador from God, to order Meat and Broth, to be pour'd out upon the Rock, with that too trivial Purpose, merely to *blow it up*, that he might vanish in the Fire, and leave *Gideon* in the Smoke.—Whereas ascending in the Flame after Delivery of so solemn and authoritative an Injunction, must have answer'd fully the majestic View, with which it seems to have been done: and left the Doubter animated into a becoming Faith and Resolution.

Sect. XX. L. 7.—*Oreb, a Midian Prince of warlike Fame.*

Too limited a Knowledge in Things military, founded on a superficial Observation of the Pride, and formulary Petulancies, of *disputed Rank*; and querulous Exceptions to, or Emulations of *Detach'd Commands, in modern War*; will probably object, against This Place, that *Oreb* was a Person of *too high a Quality*, to lead a *Party* out to lie in Ambush for Surprize of a small City. But I recur to *antient* Practice, and protest against defective Testimony.—Actions of most Renown, were These Surprisals, and light Ambushes: *Ulysses*, thus, and *Diomedes*, go out disguis'd, by Night, as but *Discoverers* of the Enemy's Camp.—*Achilles* reproaches *Agamemnon* with his Backwardness upon Occasions of this Nature. And we must not bring down *Gideon's* Days to *ours*, and buckle Reason to Perversity of Will, in faulty Adulation of Men's Pride and meaner Passions. But, to make a large Step from Antiquity, which every-where is crouded with Examples; *Modern* Times have had their Proofs, that noblest Spirits fly *above* these petty Loftinesses. *Marshal Montluc*, in his Commentaries, prides himself upon
appearing

appearing personally, at the Head of all such Enterprizes; and ascribes his whole Good Fortune (which was certainly the longest lasting, and the happiest, nay, indeed, the most unmatched and wonderful, that ever was recorded) to his resolute persisting in *This* single Practice: the Duke of *Roban* too, in his military Work, maintains (with some Degree of Anger, that it should be *question'd*) that no General, who is not prompt, by his *own Presence*, to promote the Execution of these little Services, can ever bring his Soldiers, either to That *Vigilance*, or That *Opinion* of his Valour, which are necessary to Authority. And, now of late, in our own Times, we saw good Proof of the Validity of That *French* General's Remark, in the Successes of the *Earl of Peterborow*, overrunning some of the best Provinces in *Spain*, against the Opposition of an Army, in Comparison with which *His own* might have been well mistaken for his *travelling Retinue*! This illustrious Kind of Victory, which Men obtain by inbred *Energy of Genius*, is what *properly* deserves the Name of *Conquest*. A Power of beating down one Force, by an opposing Equal one, can claim no other Title but of *Overthrow*.

Sect. XXI. L. 2.—*Observ'd a tott'ring Cliff, that loosely hung.*

Aristotle is for the *Wonderful*, in Poetry; by which, however, I suppose, he could not mean, that we should disregard the *Probable*, in Search of the *Miraculous*. But, if it must be look'd upon as reasonable, that *Hector* in the Twelfth Book of *Homer's Iliad*, could throw a Stone of Weight enough to burst the Gate of the *Greek's* Fortification before their Ships, and throw it with such *Force*, too, as to break the Bars in Pieces, and snap all the Iron Hinges (which thund'ring Stroke had the Good Fortune to please *Tasso*, so surprisngly, that he made bold to borrow it for the Use of his *Rinaldo*, against the Temple of *Jerusalem*)—if *This*, I say, can, reasonably, be believ'd, it will be no great Difficulty for the Reader to allow it *likelier*, that *Oreb* should push down a Cliff, that hung half loose already: Men, who travel on the *Alpes*, the Mountains of *Switzerland*, or cross the *Pyrenees*; or even among our own *Scotch Alps*, or *Welsh* ones; meet with nothing commoner, than such huge Craggs, broke off from upper Rocks, and stop'd by some protuberating Point, half over which they hang, so loosely, and so tott'ring, that a very little Impulse from behind, would serve to throw 'em downward; tho' a Team or two of Oxen would have much ado to move 'em, from a Place they lay on, horizontally.

Sect. XXII. L. 19.—*Ignobly hurl their Jav'lines down in vain.*

This Weapon was a very antient one, in Use among most Nations: tho' 'tis now scarce known, in *Europe*, except only in the *Turkish* Part of it. They call it, there, *Jeritt*, and are extremely dext'rous in its Exercise. The *Moors* too, all through *Africa*, retain the Use of it; and so do the *Arabians*; and some Nations of *East India*, where it has the Name of *Zagai*. The *Hebrew* Soldiers,

and great Leaders, kept 'em in their Hands by way of Ornament, in Time of Peace. *Saul* threw one of these Javelins at *Jonathan*, while he sat at Table with him. It was one of These, that *Joab* thrust through *Absalom*. They were brought early out of *Asia* into Use among the *Greeks*; for we find few, in *Homer*, kill'd by any other Weapon. Mr. *Pope* translated unreflectingly, in calling it a *Spear*. What graceful Image can we form, of *Hector* brandishing two *Spears*? By *Spear*, we are to understand, a *Pike*. Whereas the *Javelin* was but a short Staff, for casting at a Distance. The *Romans* call'd it *Pilum*, and became so fond of it, that they affected to be thought Inventors of its Use: so much is certain, that they met no Enemy, who us'd this Weapon; for what else can *Lucan* mean, when, in describing the *Pharsalian War*, he tells us that *Piles threatened Piles*? Had other Nations been so arm'd, This might have been the Case, in any of their Wars. But since the Use was proper to the *Romans*, to say *Javelins* against *Javelins* serv'd as strongly to express a *Civil War*, as if he had said *Romans* against *Romans*.

The People of *Rome* could not have borrow'd it from *Greece*, because we find in *Livy*, that They us'd it before any Intercourse had yet been open'd with That Nation. And beside, the *Greeks* themselves had, then, disus'd the *Javelin*: and been train'd to the *Egyptian* Practice, of long *Pikes*, of four and twenty Foot; in Bodies, which consisted of a Thousand in the Front, and Sixteen Men in File: sometimes, reduc'd to only *Eight* in Depth, the Ranks thereby extending to a double Length, when they would shun the Danger of being charg'd in *Rear*, by Enemies, who might out-wing them. In this Order, they compos'd a firm, impenetrable, and, on plain Ground, scarce resistible oblong Figure, call'd a *Phalanx*: where the Soldiers, arm'd defensively with Helmets, Tassets, Corslets, Brass-Boots, and Targets, closing Ranks, and propping and sustaining one another, with their *Pikes* presented over the preceding Shoulders, like the *Quills* of *Porcupines*, 'tis easy to imagine what Impression such a well-compacted Weight was capable of making; and how firmly It supported Charges from an Enemy; unless where Ditches, Hills, or other Inequalities of Ground, disturb'd, and broke their Order into little Gaps, or Intervals, at which (as in the Example of *Æmilius*, against *Perses*, at the Battle of *Pydna*) the *Roman* Legionary *Maniples* forc'd Entrance, and assaulting them in *Flank*, with their short Swords, gain'd frequent, and considerable Victories.

As to the *Pilum*, 'tis most probable the *Romans* had it, with their *Trojan* Founders, who no doubt brought into *Italy*, All Weapons they had been accusom'd to, before their Emigration. *Vegetius* and *Polybius*, Both, describe this *Pilum*, but a little differently. As far as can be gather'd out of *Roman Tactics*, It was a Staff, of weighty Wood, of four Foot long, exclusive of the *Steel*, one End of it was fasten'd into. This *Steel Head* was triangular, in Length two Foot, and very sharply edg'd, and pointed; so that the whole Length of the *Javelin* was about *Six Foot*: It was largest, where remotest from the *Iron* (though sometimes they

they are describ'd as double-headed): The poizing Place, for Grasps, was commonly about an Inch and a Quarter in Diameter.

The Legionary Foot, All, carried this peculiar missile Weapon: and could hurl it with surprising Aim, and Force, against an Enemy. The Manner of their casting it was thus—When the first Rank observ'd the Distance within Reach, they threw their Javelins, point-blank, and sunk immediately upon one Knee, to give the second Rank uninterrupted Sight, who, then, threw also, and knelt down, to give the same Advantage to the *Third*. And thus, when *Ten* whole Ranks had thrown successively (which was dispatch'd with an unceasing Swiftnes, and Agility), They started up together, with a general Shout, drew All their Swords at once, and so rush'd in upon the Enemy.

What terrible Effects have been produc'd by Javelins, we have innumerable Instances in History: but none more worthy Notice, than That Great one, at *Pharsalia*; where *Cæsar*, with his usual Skill, foreseeing, that *Pompey's Horse*, compos'd of the most warm, and fiery Spirits of the *Roman* Youth of the Patrician Houses, would be endeavouring to fall in upon his Rear, on That Wing, where his own few Horsemen were exceedingly out-reach'd, by *Pompey's*, He plac'd, in oblique Line, extending from behind the so-expos'd and threatened Flank of Cavalry, six chosen Cohorts of his veteran *Foot* (which made about Three thousand Men) and order'd These, when they receiv'd the Squadrons in their coming round upon 'em, to aim All their Javelins *at the Faces only* of Those gay young Chargers. It succeeded, to his Wish. The Horse came furiously *about*: but starting unexpectedly on this Reserve of such experienc'd Wounders, were receiv'd with so successive Showers of *Javelins*, in their Eyes, Cheeks, Necks, and Foreheads, that unable to support the Horror of such maim'd, and miserable Faces (for the Horse had no *Vant-braces* to their Helmets), they All turn'd their Backs precipitately, and disordering their own *Foot*, lost *Pompey* that important Day; and gave the World to *Cæsar*.

Sect. 25. L. 5.—*Then Gideon found it prudent to retreat.*

There is no Chance, and most especially in War, which so effectually, and suddenly, destroys the Interests of Men, as Want of due Discernment where to *stop*, in the smooth Race of Fortune. They see nothing but plain bowling Way, before 'em: and, if they ever look *behind*, it is not till their Rear is *broken in upon*. There is an Eye on *every Side* of Prudence, and she *sees* all round her. *Gideon*, who had so lately gain'd the Out-set of his Influence, by the Valour he had shewn in the Dispute with *Oreb*, was to make Advantage, of the favourable Opportunity. As he was Leader, in this hot Pursuit, and saw, that he was follow'd by his Countrymen without Regard to Consequence, He might have push'd the Enemy beyond the Hill, and made considerable Slaughter, as they pass'd the River. But how, *there*, should so disorderly a Body have resisted, on *plain* Ground, the Re-inforcements coming up, to the Assistance of the flying Enemy?

Enemy? In calm Debate, within Himself, he found the Hope of added Glory, from the Conquest, overbalanc'd, by a Certainty of *losing That already His*, in case of Disappointment, and Defeat in Hazard for it. He determines, therefore, to retreat, and guard the Safety of the People with him: on whose Favour he was now to build, for All the Promise of his future Fortune.

Sect. XXVII. L. 4.—*Th' assembled Elders, o'er the City Gate.*

The frequent Devastations brought upon the *Jews*, first, by the Princes of the East, then, by the *Roman Emperors*, and, in All Ages since, by the Resentment and Revenge of *Christian Zeal*, for ever warm against them, have so irrecoverably destroy'd their *Records*, that, excepting their Remains of Law and History, preserv'd in the Old Testament, there can be nothing more obscure, than the Formalities in Civil Government, observ'd by this unhappy People. Their *Priests*, who were the sole Repositories of their Learning, Faith, and Ceremonies, have been cut off, almost to a Man, in general and commission'd Massacres: and Opportunities, which This produc'd, gave Room for Forgeries, and infinite Impertinence, and superstitious Dreamings, to their *Rabbins*, and their *Talmudists*. Nor have the *Christian Writers*, to say Truth, clear'd more from the Confusion, than appears to have been added to it. *Josephus* liv'd at the same Time with *Christ's Apostles*, and is one of our best Guides, in Searches of this Nature; but, besides that he is often not so full, as might be wish'd, his Countrymen had undergone so many *Changes* before then, that *Ten Tribes* of the *Twelve* were utterly extirpated: and the Government, and Customs of the other *Two*, so different, in many of their most considerable Circumstances, from the Institutions left by *Moses*, that for Matters of remote Antiquity we cannot safely rest on *his* Authority. Thus much, however, may be gather'd, from his Testimony, and the *Hebrew Model*, as remaining in the Bible, that Each City had a *Senate*, of her *Elders*; that These were generally *Seven*, with a *Levite* on each Hand, for Exposition of their Law, and to record, as well as regulate, Proceedings. They sat exactly in the Form describ'd: The *Place* above the City Gate; to signify, that Justice was to guard, and circumscribe, their Habitations. These *Senates* of their Cities judg'd All Points of Right within their Districts: but were under Check of an *Appeal* to *Capitals of Tribes*: the Cause might, there, be heard again, before the *Prince* of That particular Tribe; who had Election also of his *City Senates*: Lastly, from these provincial Princes, lay Appeal, in final Termination, to the *Sanhedrim*: But, till the general Defection alter'd the *Mosaic* Order, Appeal lay from the *Sanhedrim* to the *High-Priest*; and His Decision was the last; and under Penalty of *Death*, to be submitted to.—All which shall be progressively, made evident, in Notes upon the Books to follow.

Sect. XXX. L. 10.—*Were, sure, design'd by Heav'n, for wide Controul.*

The Accident, that had so lately given Occasion of Applause on *Gideon's* Bravery, returning with a *Royal* Prisoner ; and which had open'd to his Countrymen an unexpected Promise from his Virtues ; is the *Point of Sight* in his particular Case, some *one*, of which, Men often are plac'd in by *Fortune* : but whence, if they have fit Discernment to make use of the Advantage, they find All their future Way more easy. They *dazzle*, by their sudden Splendor ; and prevent Inspection, by Excess of Lustre. Like Men, who hold Dark-lanterns up before 'em, they present a strong, but undistinguishable, *Glare*, behind which They Themselves discern Things clearly, through the Light, which makes Those *blind*, who *look against* them.

Such a Light enlarg'd the Influence of *Gideon's* Virtues. It is not from the Merit of the Truths, he has been recommending, that the Senators derive their Warmth of Admiration. A Man, to whom such Sentiments were natural, would doubtless have express'd 'em many Times before, when, yet, they had produc'd no such Effect in Favour of the Speaker. But the Case is, now, grown different. It is not to *Gideon*, the Son of *Joash*, their Fellow Citizen, and old Acquaintance, they have all this while been list'ning. It is to *Gideon* made illustrious, by Applause and Wonder of the People. What had been common in the MAN, was grown prodigious in the *Conqueror* ; and Words, which were, before, thought only worth Neglect, are found, by this new Light, to merit more than Admiration.

Every Thing we have heard of, Every Thing we admire, will be found, upon Reflection, to have been the Gift of *Opportunity*. Had not *Lucretia's Death* succeeded to her *Rape* ; or some equivalent Excitement rous'd the till-then latent Indignation of the *Roman* People into Transport ; *Brutus* would still have been constrain'd to have *kept on* his Cloak of unexampled Diffimulation ; and the History of His Times had wanted one ferocious Instance, that Disguise of Passions can consist with the most stern Inflexibility.

In the same City, the same Senate, and same People, who, while under Hope, or Fear from *Pompey's* Fortune, gave Consent to all Indignities his Jealousy could heap on *Cæsar*, and who, with a malignant Laziness, suppos'd him, in his Absence, of no longer Consequence, chang'd Disposition in a Moment, and had, now, no Ear for any Thing but *Cæsar*.—*Cæsar's* Valour ! *Cæsar's* Goodness ! *Cæsar's* Fortune !—For they saw All This by the *new Light*, his unexpected March to *Rome* had lent 'em. The terrible Success of so astonishing a Boldness taught 'em to consider, as *invincible*, a Courage, that could meet such Danger with a steady Eye. And That first daring Step drew Half the Nation from his Rival's Interest.

Sect. XXXI. L. 11.—*So, wand'ring wide, he reach'd the Grove of Baal.*

Baal was the *Sun*, and *Ashtaroath* the *Moon* ; at least, they were most generally so reputed. But concerning these great Eastern Idols, and the different Accounts, in Writers, of their Forms, and Modes of Worship, much more might be noted, than

than could be of Use, or Pleasure, here.—It will be All the Subject calls for, to observe, that they were generally plac'd on *Hills*, with gloomy Groves surrounding them. For they were worship'd in the open Air, because it was suppos'd presumptuous to confine their *Gods* to Temples, who were Omnipresent, and illimitable.—Therefore, when the *Hebrews* (as they often did) fell off to the Idolatry of their next-bord'ring Nations, *They made them Images*, says Scripture, *and planted Groves about 'em; and set up an Idol upon every high Hill, and under every green Tree; after the Abominations of the Kingdoms, which were round about them.*

The Description of the Grove of *Baal*, and of the *Image*, was to be as full, and circumstantial, as it could be made; first, as it was a matter of Importance in the Story, there having really been, at *Ophra*, such a Grove, and Idol; most of the Inhabitants, and even *Gideon's Father*, seeming to have been its Worshipers: and secondly, as there arose poetical Occasion, for an Ornament, from the Position, Figure, Grove, and solemn Picture of the *Hill*; which commonly was artificial, many still remaining, in some Parts of *Palestine*.

Sect. XXXII. L. 17.—*Where can we better Virtue's Race begin?*

It is with a *prophetic Spirit*, *Gideon's Zeal* transports him in this Place; the sacred Text discovering, that the Consequences, of his cutting down the Grove of *Baal*, became the Means of raising him to a Capacity of gathering into one collective Body That first military Strength, to which he ow'd his own succeeding Triumphs, and his Country's double Rescue, from the *Arms*, and *Idols*, of their Enemy.

Sect. XXXIII. L. 15.—*Enough for Them, that 'tis by GIDEON meant.*

From the Aid he here receives from the *Ten Slaves*, whom he had taken in the Cave, and saved their Lives, when sentenc'd by the Senate, there arises seasonable Opportunity to speak a Word or two, concerning *Episodes*, in general. They never must deserve the Name, which *Horace* gives the independent Parts of some of his Cotemporary's Pieces; they are, instead of the *DISJECTI membra Poetae*, to be found *attach'd*, as well as beautiful. To heap together a wild Store of Incidents unlook'd for, and surprising, will require but the Assistance of a lively *Fancy*. To chuse *which* is fit, which not, This is a Business for the *Judgment*. There was, some time since, a *Sheep*, with a fine *Top-knot* on its Head: There was a little after, an *Hungarian Girl*, who had a Sister growing to her Back. Both These were Objects *unexpected*, and *surprising*; but they were, however, *Monsters*, and offensively *unnatural*. They were like the Poems of *Ariosto*, (and I wish I could not add, some Passages in our Great *Spencer's*) into which a fairy Dance of incoherent light Adventures, of the most *Romantic* Model possible—if we except the *Tales* in the *Arabian Night's* unmatched Extravagancies—crouded on, and wedg'd themselves without Connection, Cause, or Consequence; All, loose, and
separate,

separate, in their Natures, and yet ramm'd together by the Impulse of the Poet's Spirit. In reading such a Poem, I imagine it like looking down upon a *Sea*, where long Successions of huge Surges after Surges, foaming from all Quarters, without Point of View to rest upon, move *Horror*, tho', at the same time, they strike with a wild Kind of Wonder, something like Delight. The Whole amuses the Attention: nothing leads it, in particular. A regular *Epic* Poet draws along the Mind, as *Rivers* do the Sight: however strong the Current, and the Course tho' vast and winding, yet the Flow itself is orderly, the Force confin'd within its Banks, and if it takes in *Episodical* Brooks, it is, to *deepen*, not *divide*, its Chanel.

Should therefore this Deliverance of the *Slaves* have purpos'd nothing further, than to set off *Gideon*, and display his Generosity, the Contrivance had been flat, and wanted the Characteristic of an *Epic Episode*. For, while it could not be discern'd, that It had any Influence toward Advance of the main Action, the Reader would have thought their History too inconsiderable to atone for the Digression, they mislead him into. But the Interest of these honest Men becomes intitled to our whole Attention and Concern, as soon as we observe, that, from their Gratitude, an Action is deriv'd, that gives Foundation to the great one, purpos'd by the Poem: and reflect, that no Men, less oblig'd, could have been drawn to a Participation, in so menacing a Danger.

It is probable, in actual Truth, that These ten Servants, who, the Text says, aided *Gideon*, in the Night (for Fear of the Inhabitants of *Ophra*, and the Rest of their own Family), were Persons, whom He had engag'd to his particular Interest, by Effect of some uncommon Obligation; It being impossible they should not have *foreseen* the Uproar and Resentment, which attended their Presumption: and no Ordinary Temptation had prevail'd on Men of Their expos'd Condition, to provoke so visible a Hazard.

It is the same again, in That *next Episode*; where the Defeat of *Oreb's* Party, and His being made a *Prisoner*, was not introduc'd to give a Proof of *Gideon's* Bravery, but, from Effect of its Exertion, to possess him of the Public Admiration. I repeat the Observation, tho' already noted, to imprint Remembrance of this not to be dispens'd with Requisite, in *Episodes*, that they *produce*, and make Each other *necessary*; and contribute, All, to the *Completion* of the *Epic Action*.

Sect. XXXV. L. 4. and 5. ————— On the hissing Flame,
Pour'd the warm Blood.

I purposely *abridge* the ceremonial Rites of *Sacrifice*: not only as the formal *Apparatus* for, and Practice in 'em All (*Burnt-Offerings*, *Peace-Offerings*, *Sin-Offerings*, and the Rest), may be particularly found, in the *Mosaic Writings*, but, as *Gideon*, in so unforeseen a Call to the Occasion, could not be expected to have come prepar'd for the Formalities; nor was he vested, for it, with the Right of

M

Priesthood:

Priesthood: and He knew sufficiently, by the Direction he proceeded under, that His *Offering* could need no Punctuality, to render it acceptable.

But over and above All This, there cannot be denied to rise offensive Images, from a too long Detail of Cutting up of Beasts, washing their Bowels, broiling the Fat, and such *carnific* Circumstances. I consent with all my Heart, to *Lord Roscommon's* Notion of this Matter.

- “ For who, without a *Qualm*, has ever look'd
- “ On holy *Garbage*, though by *Homer* cook'd!
- “ Take foul Descriptions, in which Light you will;
- “ If *Like*, they nauseate: if *unlike*, they're ill.

Sect. XXXVII. L. 6.—*From the tough Trunk's big Bulk, back-bounding Blows recoil.*

I hope I need not apprehend this Line in Danger to be look'd upon, as guilty of more *Roughness*, than It very well can justify, from what was touch'd in a preceding Note, concerning the Assimilation of the *Sound* to the describ'd *Idea*. But, as the hard *Rebound* is owing here, to the selected *Monosyllables*, I ought to add, in their Defence, that, us'd with any Choice, or Care, they are a Beauty, and Advantage; and both *tune* our Language and *enrich* it. I will wish no plainer Proof, *in Favour of*, than Mr. *Pope* has brought, *against* them.

And ten low Words oft creep in one dull Line.

By the Way, creep THROUGH, had better answer'd his Intention, than creep IN. But, if it had not been for our abundant Choice of Monosyllable Words, how then could Mr. *Pope* have imitated, with so beautiful a Force, the very Fault he was exposing? The Truth is, It is not a long String of such short Words, that makes Verse *jar* upon the Ear.—Short Syllables, when they are *Words*, may, by judicious Intermixture of the *Vowels*, with the Consonants, succeed Each other with as smooth a Cadence, as can Syllables, which are but *Parts* of Words.—The studied Roughness, in this Verse of Mr. *Pope's*, arises only from a reluctant Reluctance of its Accents to concur, in That *Insertion* into one Another, which is necessary, to make Words harmonious. I could shew a thousand Monosyllable Lines, in Mr. *Dryden's*, and great Numbers, too, in Mr. *Pope's own Poems*, than which nothing can be capable of a more exquisite *Smoothness*.—It is easy to derive the same Proof, even from Blank Verse, and *Milton*, where it seems least reasonable to suppose too nice a Care of *Softness*, from *Selection* of his *Syllables*.—In *Eve's* Reproach of *Adam*, for Example, *Paradise lost*, the Ninth Book.

Why should he mean me ill, or seek to harm?

She speaks it of the *Devil*; and the Author, therefore, will be scarce conceiv'd to have endeavour'd this *sweet* Flow of Monosyllables. Verse compos'd so, never carries

carries Roughness, where due Care is taken, that the Syllables are *heavily*, or *lightly* ACCENTED, in just Proportion to the Sense, they move with. But, in Mr. Pope's, the Words are purposely so *chosen*, that Each Syllable requires *Emphatical Expansion*: and, in That Case, there can be no *Music*, for the very Reason, that makes Difference betwixt the *Tolling out one Bell*, and ringing a whole *Belfry*.

I have omitted a short Note, which ought to have been plac'd in the Beginning, The Reader will observe, I commonly make Choice of the Appellative, *Hebrews*.—The Word *Israelite* is no more fit for Poetry, than *Children of Israel*: To have call'd 'em *Jews* had been a visible Absurdity; since That was a *posterior* Name, on their Reduction to Two Tribes, and the exclusive Kingdom of *Judah* only. The other Ten Tribes, till their final Extirpation, own'd no Name but their Original one, of *Israel*. Their general Appellative, among the bordering Aliens, seems to have been *Hebrews*; which effectually includes 'em All; and was deriv'd to 'em from *Heber*, Sixth, in Ascent, from *Abraham*; and Second, from *Arphaxad*, *Noah's* Grandson.





G I D E O N;

O R,

The P A T R I O T.

B O O K II.

I.

'T W A S Morning: and, o'er *Ophra's* Tow'rs, the Sun
 Rose lovely, with unusual Lustre bright:
 For, pleas'd to find the long-wish'd Task begun,
 His Fires glow'd sparkling, with intense Delight.
 But *Gideon*, well reflecting what was done,
 Restless had mus'd away the tedious Night;
 And from a Garden's silent Shade, look'd longing, for the Light.
 There *Joash*, risen from interrupted Rest,
 Found, and breath'd Blessings o'er, his penfive Son:
 And, now by Wonder, now by Fear, oppress'd
 Heard All distinctly; from the Angel's *Hail*,
 To the Grove's Ruin, and the Fall of *Baal*.

II.

II.

Gideon, said He, Prop of my failing Years!

If what thy Father's doubtful Love shall speak

Should seem too coldly weigh'd, too kindly weak,

Think, in Excuse of what may harsh appear,

Youth is too full of Hope; and Age, of Fear.

He paus'd, and turn'd: and Dry'd a starting Tear.

'Tis great, continued He, this Thirst of Fame!

Bright, tho' dang'rous, is the Flame,

That warms thy manly Breast, with this extensive Aim.

But, art thou not deceiv'd, by some fair Dream?

Things strongly wish'd, Men oft believe they see:

For vigorous Fancy can so subtly seem,

That *Nonexistence* may be thought to be.

If 'twas, in Truth, an Angel, thou hast seen,

Joash is happy, and his Country blest:

Afflicted *Israel*, then, shall soon find Rest:

But, if my *Gideon* has deluded been,

Then, who from Mis'ry my sad House shall screen?

Who, save Thy harmless Infants, from the Sword?

Thy Soul-distracting Grief, alas! will no Relief afford:

Thy Punishment include a People's Fate;

And thy too bold and honest Heart, be undeceiv'd, too late.

III.

Rev'rend, and wise, reply'd th' attentive Chief,

Your Doubt of Me, by past Experience mov'd,

Admits, obscure, and slowly, the Belief,

That I am heav'n-approv'd.

Yet,

Yet; coldest Caution safely may confess,
Weakness, where God supports, can strongly bless.
Nor blush, unlikely as it is, the glorious Hope to own :
Occasion, oft, has latent Virtue, shown,
Where Kindred's too *close* Sight distinguish'd none.
Call'd by th' Almighty's leading Voice, I go,
Fearless, amidst yon Camp, on *Jezreel's* Plain.
Fain would I thence remove th' incumbent Foe :
Their neighb'ring Weight does my warm Wish restrain.
To Arms, till then, 'twere dang'rous to repair,
Lest our aw'd Tribes, th' Oppressor view'd too nigh,
Shrink from assum'd Resolve ; disperse, and fly.
You, venerable Sire ! mean while, prepare
Th' assembled Senate, for th' important Hope ;
Tell 'em, *God's Promise* lends *Contraction Scope* ;
The Fall of *Baal*, with its great Cause, declare :
And charm 'em with th' inspiring News, of Heav'n's recover'd Care.

IV.

Speaking, he bow'd ; and, turning swift away,
Left the sad Father's Answer, half unmade.
Joash broke short what Prudence meant to say :
Silent look'd after him ; his Words, long weigh'd ;
Then, stretch'd to Heav'n his aged Arms, and begs the doubted Aid.
—On the North Range of *Ophra's* rugged Wall,
Rose a round Tow'r, of white and massy Stone :
Seen, from whose Summit's far-commanding View,
High-posted Archers Bows unerring, drew ;
Thence, o'er steep Windings, aw'd the Road below,
Check'd the rash Hope of an advent'rous Foe :

Stopp'd

Stopp'd Passengers, and left th' Ascent to None,
 Till Who they were, and whence they came, was shewn.
 Deep, in the vaulted *Base*, Life's languid *Tomb*!
 A still, damp, *Dungeon* lodg'd eternal Gloom.
 Its iron Door, which rust-worn Hinges hung,
 Harsh grating, through the stony Portal, swung.
 Echo's hard Groan threw sad Sensation round,
 And thought-bound *Silence* started, at the Sound!
 Painful *Regard* strain'd sharp her visual Ray,
 To catch faint Embryos, of excluded Day;
 Where, through thick Walls, oblique, thin *Ghosts* of Light,
 Gleam'd from pale Loop-holes, quiver'd to the Sight.

V.

Here, well secur'd, the State her Pris'ners, kept:
 And here, this Night, confin'd, Prince *Oreb* slept.
 Yet, no vile Chain insulted his Restraint;
 Well treated, by his gen'rous Guardian's Care;
 Who, from Captivity, to chase Complaint,
 Shut out no Freedom, but of Light, and Air.
 Here, with swift and furious Stride,
 Close-folded Arms, and short and sudden Starts,
 The fretful Prince, in dumb and sullen Pride,
 Revolv'd Escape, and curs'd, in Pain, his People's coward Hearts.

VI.

So *Gideon* finds him: and, with gentle Grace,
 Accosts him thus---Great Prince! your scopeful Will
 Suffers Restraint, I see, but ill.

Those

Those Feet, long us'd your Enemies to chase,
 Spurn at Detention; and were nerv'd for Space.
 Tho' manly Sufferers loud Complaint restrain,
 Impatient Silence paints internal Pain.

But, *Smiles* are Wisdom, where Regret is *vain*.

Great Minds, in Want of present Ease,
 Should teach some future Hope to please.
 Such if your Prospect, I would aid its Claim.

Take, Sir, your Sword: and, from this Moment, *free*,
 Re-fire your Camp, to War's recover'd Flame:

Go, ransomless.—No Grace deserves Regard,
 That stoops to *barter* Virtue, for *Reward*.

My noblest Gain, let This *due* Glory be,
 That He, whose erring Arms oppress'd the Free,
 Ow'd His own forfeit Liberty, to *me*.

VII.

The silent Prince, whom this new Chance alarms,

Stood fix'd, awhile, with an astonish'd Air:

Then, swift advancing, snatch'd him to his Arms.

O *Baal*! he cry'd, How much, in War, they *dare*!

Yet, after Victory, how *mild*, they are!

Why am I *hostile*, to such manly Charms?

More he had said, but *Gideon*, whose warm Mind

Flash'd its *first* Greatness o'er his Captive's Soul,

And schem'd a length'ning Lustre, yet *behind*;

Thus interrupted, ere he spoke the Whole.

Nations ill taught make War a barb'rous Trade:

But Men who fight for Liberty, and Peace,

When their Arms prosper, by th' Almighty's Aid,

Feel their Revenge *impow'r'd*: and bid it *cease*.

Near is your Camp. Yet, lest th'impeded Way
 Prove dang'rous, while this Mountain you descend,
 Myself, your Safeguard, will your Steps attend.
 Charg'd with ALLIANCE, offer'd to your State,
 Let your met Kings, th'auxiliar Purpose weigh,
 Hold us Confed'rate, and retract their *Hate*.
 Pledge me your Royal Faith, lest slight Pretence
 Bids Force detain me: or, returning, thence,
 Some ambush'd Wrong provokes unwith'd Offence.
 — By the high thund'ring *Baal*! the Prince reply'd,
 By blood-stain'd *Moloch*! — pale *Astarte*'s Beam!
 Hot *Belial*! and whole Heav'n's collective Host!
 Gods, Male and Female, who yon Realms divide!
 Those, whom *We* worship! Him, of whom *You* dream!
 And whose joint *Aid* is warlike *Midian*'s Boast:
 All, who shall dare Thy Wrong, My Sword defies.
 Thou shalt be safe: or *Oreb*, with thee, dies.

VIII.

He spoke; and stooping through a Postern Gate,
 Which, from the Tow'r, led, winding, down the Hill,
Gideon, descending, with eductive Skill,
 Steers his Companion, 'twixt the mazy Rocks,
 And the deep Cleavings of the Hill unlocks.
 Dark'ning and cool, beneath th'incumbent Shade
 Of goat-browz'd *Bushes*; which, in Sylvan State,
 Bow'd, by their own declining Weight,
 Hung deep'ning o'er the ragged Cliffs, and in the Breezes play'd;
 A short, unpeopled, Path, their Feet explore;
 High from whose shelvy Steeps far round, hoarse-tumbling Torrents roar.

Down, cross the craggy Lab'rinth, safely flow,
 From Rock to Rock they slide; from Shade to Shade;
 Each lending Other, heedful Aid:
 Till, from the Glooms of their untrodden Way,
 As Men, from Night, wake sudden, into Day,
 They saw the silver Stream, at Distance, flow:
 And flash'd upon the op'ning Plain, below.

IX.

Now, on the Valley's Edge, th' egressive Pair
 Outstarting, spy'd, from far, a dusty Cloud,
 Which wid'ning circled tow'rd 'em, in the Air;
 And half conceal'd a wild and noisy Crowd,
 Through which, the Ring of brazen Wheels, was heard distinct and loud.
 When to the River, unobserv'd, they came,
 They found the Charioteers of Oreb, there:
 Wat'ring their wanton Steeds, with heedless Aim;
 Wide-dispers'd, and loose, they were:
 Thoughtless of Danger, All, and void of Care.
 The Prince beheld 'em, with indignant Shame:
 His Pride felt Anguish, and his Eyes shot Flame.
 Unwary Slaves! he cry'd—Is This the Way?
 Retrieve Ye, *thus*, the Fame so lately lost?
 My Coward Foot, in Arms, their Prince, betray:
 My Horse, untaught by their Companion's Cost,
 Regardless Negligence, *un-arm'd*, display:
 And long to be as infamous, as They!
 Why met I not your Outguards, posted here?
 What, on this Quarter, thus expos'd, our neighb'ring Camp, defends?

Since, for me, the Road was clear,
 What, if the Foe lay ambush'd, near?
 Wretches! is yon strong Mountain held, by *Friends*?
 His People heard him, with a glad Surprise:
 Mix'd, in their Breasts, the vary'd Passions rise:
 But Joy, triumphant, stifling Sense of Shame,
 A Storm of Shouts rose ceaseless, to the Skies:
 Echoing, the bord'ring Hills th' Alarm proclaim,
 And the wide Valley rings, with *Oreb's* Name.

X.

High, on an open Chariot's airy Seat,
 In State, the Prince and *Gideon* onward ride:
 Re-closing swift, th' outstart'd Squadrons meet,
 And flow behind 'em, like a following Tide.
 Pour'd from the Camp, the mingled Nations roar,
 Sweeping, tumultuous, o'er the dusty Plain:
 Loose Horse and Foot, in stretch'd Extent, still length'ning more and more,
 In endless Chain of Triumph, swell the Train.
 But, when Both Swarms met mix'd, upon the Green,
 And *Oreb's* high-rais'd Chariot shone, between:
 Should'ring, the clam'rous Concourse gather'd round,
 And clogg'd his Progress, and o'erwedg'd his Ground:
 Slow mov'd th'incumber'd Pomp, through deaf'ning Noise;
 And the Prince labour'd, with the People's Joys.
 So, when, within some Island's sea-wash'd Streight,
 A Bark, with full-blown Canvas, holds her Course,
 Two billowy *Currents* urge encount'ring Weight;
 And, swell'd to Uproar by cross Clash of Tides;

Roll murm'ring on ; and, climbing wild and hoarse,
Work o'er Each Other, with contending Force :
Heav'd through ascending Foam, the way-stop'd Vessel rides,
And scarce, with All her bellying Sails, th'encircling Roar, *divides*.

XI.

Safe, to th'expecting Camp, at last, they come,
Where, waiting, All th'assembled Chiefs, they found ;
There, did Joy's liveliest Ecstasies abound :
And false Congratulation, too, bow'd formal, to the Ground.
From Ev'ry Side at once, the thund'ring Drum
Beat his hoarse Welcome ; while, in shriller Sound,
The Trumpet's soft and trembling Note flow'd undulating round.
White, on a smooth and gently rising Hill
Full in the Centre of the Camp, was pitch'd
One crown'd Pavilion, of unmatched Extent ;
Lin'd with an *azure* Field of Silk, by *crimson* Groves enrich'd :
Whence *gold* and *purple* Fruits, in Clusters bent,
Fed the charm'd Eye, with feastful Ornament.
Three Walls, of circlly *green*, th'imperial Tent,
Guarded at equal Distances, invest :
Wide, round th'exterior Third, lay, far outspread,
Smooth *Void*, whose silent Range admits no vulgar Tread :
For, there, th'affociate *Monarch's* Feet the hallow'd Surface press'd.

XII.

Hither, to Council, while they bent their Way,
In his right Hand, Prince *Oreb*, *Gideon*, led :
The graceful *Hebrew* march'd at Ease, and gay ;
And from his Eyes a radiant Sweetness, shed.
Circled by Kings, and taller, by the Head,

His native Majesty eclips'd their Pride :
 A Leopard's Skin, the Paws, together, ty'd,
 Dreadfully gay, was o'er his Shoulder, spread :
 And, to the Right, flop'd pendent, from his Side.
 A rich wide-skirted Crimson Vest
 O'er-wrap'd, with conscious Glow, his manly Breast :
 Girt by a purple, silver-studded Belt ;
 In which his fated Sword at Freedom hung.
 While, at each Step, his Arm, was gently swung,
 The low-poiz'd Spear, majestic, seem'd to nod :
 And sway'd, with threat'ning Grandeur, as he trod.
 Cool, o'er his fair and bloom-enliven'd Face,
 A jet-black Plume wav'd flow, with shadowy Grace.

XIII.

Now, round the enter'd Umbrage, marching flow,
 The Royal Brotherhood their Places, fill.
 Encircling Legions edge the Plain below :
 O'er whose close Heads unfurling Ensigns flow ;
 And, from th'important Space to ward off Ill,
 A steely Grove of glitt'ring Spears rise round the dreadful Hill.
 From the Tent-door, a Chief his Jav'lin shook,
 And thrice distinctly founded on his Shield :
 The watchful Guards the well-known Signal took,
 And rung it downward, through the war-dress'd Field.
 Silenc'd, the distant Soldiers sit, and wait
 Th' Event of All their Sov'reign's joint Debate.
 Gradual, the floating Roar of War subsides,
 And sinking Clamour draws back All her Tides.
 Soft, the sweet Trumpet's Echoes die away ;
 And the yet murm'ring Drum, unwilling sleeps :

Through

Through the still Air, thin-body'd Whispers play ;
And voiceless, o'er the awe-hush'd Camp, profound Attention creeps.

XIV.

Then *Oreb*, glowing gen'rous, thus began :
Brothers in War ! Kings, of confed'rate Sway !
Lend Action Ev'ry grateful Pow'r you can :
Words are too weak, to thank this godlike Man.
If, to behold me here, alive, To-day,
Aids your Arm's Prospect, and you wish to know,
From what kind Source, my future Hope must flow,
'Twill sound surprising, in your Royal Ear,
That when, unman'd by a repulsive Fear,
Despairing *Friends* abandon'd Fame, and Me ;
This wond'rous *Foe*, this *Hebrew*, whom you see,
Conquer'd, to *save* ; and set me *free* !
Then, touch'd with Warmth, but to the Gen'rous known,
He told his People's Flight : told, how, Alone,
He stop'd the *Hebrews*, with the *Giant Stone*.
Told, how he fought, escap'd ; and, from the Cave,
Pursuing Others, lost Himself, again :
Told, how his Conqueror, serenely brave,
Ransomless, his Freedom, gave.
And, shall, said He, this glorious Act, but, empty *Praise*, obtain ?
No.—Tho' th'unvenal Benefactor's Mind
Flow'd out on Virtue, ev'n for Virtue's Sake,
They, whom such stainless Obligations bind,
Should doubly weigh the Worth, of All they take :
And, where they find the Debt without *Allay*,
With tenfold Gratitude, make Haste to pay.

He paus'd:—and, with a loud, concurrent, Praise,
 Spread, on the Breast, his Hand, Each Monarch lays:
 Jointly oblig'd, Each sep'rate, Vows Regard;
 And bids the Stranger *name* his wish'd Reward.

XV.

Gideon smil'd satisfy'd: and, bowing low,
 Reply'd—Great Kings! you Nothing owe.
 Light were His Virtue, and of narrow Scope,
 Who weigh'd his Sense of *Duty*, by his *Hope*.

Much you o'er-rate a Mark of *due* Respect:
 Bless'd, as I was, to snatch th'important Care,
 A Prince, of MIDIAN, to *protect*!

Esteem it but an Instance of That Pride,
 With which our Tribes remember, *who you are*.
 Nor think me vain, th'Occasion, so, supply'd,
 If I remind you, we are near *ally'd*.

—*Midian*, the mighty Founder of your Name,
 Was, ev'n as *Isaac* was, our ABR'AM's Son.

Both had an equal Start, and Spur, to Fame:
 Both, in one Father's Blessing, equal Claim:
 Tho', (thence *our* Grief!) in diff'rent Paths, to run.

○, Power, of Custom! Law, Religion! Place!

Little, alas! our common Parent thought,
 His time-chang'd Sons, unmindful of their Race,
 In diff'rent Lands, a diff'rent Int'rest taught,
 With hostile Rancour, should Each Other chase;
 And *War*, fraternal Glory to efface!

But, Heav'n be thank'd! It was not, *always*, so.—
 When, from proud *Egypt*'s hard Oppression, led,

When

When, deep through *desart Wastes*, compell'd to go,
Kind MIDIAN taught our cherish'd Feet to tread;
Even to these Plains where *Midian now*, encamps, our fiercest *Foe*,
We were, *by Midian*, led.

When hospitable JETHRO'—Hail, great Name!
You know it, mighty Princes!—for, you claim
Deriv'd Succession, both in Blood and Fame;
When *He*, kind Guide! left Country, Power, and Ease,
Our March's Guardian, through its hard Degrees!
Even to This *Canaan*, whence, (oh, Force, of *Years*!)
You strive to root us out, in Blood, and Tears:

He knew, that *Midian's* Sons, with *Israel's* join'd,
Were *Brothers*, parted long, and re-combin'd.

Doubtless, his Wisdom had found good, to weigh,
That Countries, given to *Abr'am's* general Race,

Might not alone be soonest won,
By Deeds of War conjointly done;

But, that, so conquer'd, such Extent of Space
Might stretch joint Blessing, for our mix'd Embrace.

Israel, he knew, no *sep'rate Claim*, could lay,
Since *Midian's* Race had *Abr'am's* Right, as notedly as *They*.

Why are we *Foes* then?—Arm'd, on *Midian's* Side,
Lead us to Realms, whose Wealth we might divide.

As yet, the poorest Part of *Canaan's* ours:
Her *western Coast* defies even *Midian's* Powers.

Wide, from *Gaza*, Northward, spread,
Lie Countries we regard with Dread.

Who has not heard of *SIDON's* boastful State?
And the proud Opulence of trade-ful *TYRE*?

We, barrenly confin'd to inland Rocks,
Unhappily are warr'd on, by our *Friends*:

They, unexpos'd to hostile Shocks,
Bribing Indemnity, when *Pride* offends,
 On foodful Pastures shear unnumber'd Flocks :
 And, safe, in all the Insolence of Peace,
 Grasp golden Plenty : and provoke Increase.

XVI.

Oreb, with sympathetic Rapture fir'd,
 Starts from his Seat, impell'd by *Gideon's* Flame :
 Shall *Hebrews*, then, by *alien Gods* inspir'd,
 For *hostile Midian*, point out Paths to Fame !
 B A A L moves 'em !—I attest His dreadful Name :
 Blast He my Fortune, if, by *me requir'd*,
 This *Hebrew's* Hint re-starts my favourite Aim !
 Since, lately, half-resolv'd, we weigh'd this Scheme,
 Let us no longer willing Friends oppress :
 'Tis Reason's Debt, Esteemers to esteem.
 Pay not propos'd Attachment, with Distress.
 Grant aidful *Israel* her indulg'd Desire :
 And turn War's Thunder on devoted *Tyre*.
 A few Days March conducts us to her Walls,
 Open, the Road ; the Country stor'd, and gay,
 Sheds wanton Plenty o'er th'inviting Way.
 What can we want then ?—Haste, at once, away.
 Surpris'd defenceless, now, while Fortune calls,
 All Hope forsakes 'em : and their City falls.

XVII.

Grave from his Place rose *Zeb*, in formal State :
 Heavy with Age ; yet, Age his smallest Weight.

Fortune had given him only Blifs to bear:
 But Nature heap'd him with a Load, of Care.
 His parsimonious Soul but ill could scan
 The Diff'rence, 'twixt the *Monarch*, and the *Man*.
 Courage he wanted not: but held in vain—
 For, his chief End, in every War, was *Gain*.
 Deep, in his labour-furrow'd *Look*, his Av'rice stood engrav'd:
 And even his Silence told the *Eye*, he *crav'd*.
 This *Tyrian* War, says He, has *my* Consent.
 Rich is the Country: praiseful the Intent.
 Since *Israel's* Right of Kindred, we confess,
 Let us her Poverty no harder press.
 E'en let her, once for All, her Tribes *assess*:
 And, gath'ring friendly what she can, *buy off* th'undue Distress.
 Pity pleads for 'em. We can do no less
 Than let 'em hold, in Peace, their *thin* Remains.
 Spare the poor Penitents.—Alas! Their Plains
 Were, long since, *Ours*; Their Mountains yield small Gains:
 And *lean* Contention is not worth our Pains.
Sidon and *Tyre* with endless *Wealth* abound:
 A thriving People! skill'd in gainful Arts!
 Commerce their *Treas'ry* fills: Herds *hide* their Ground.
 Trade a *big Weakness* proudly imparts:
 But trembling Hands ill guard presumptuous Hearts.

XVIII.

Agag, of *Amalek*, sat next:
 A Prince, of temper'd Courage; wisely cold.
 No rising Passion His slow Thought perplex'd:
 Doubtful, with Vigour, and with Caution, bold.

A long Experience taught him to suspect :
 He fear'd All Counsels ; but would none neglect.
 Justly he weigh'd ; and did, with Choice, reject.
 Alike 'twould grieve me, the wise Prince began,
 To miss the Meaning, or mistake the Man.
 Yet, *least* errs *He*, who *weigh'd* Conclusion draws ;
 And, seeking Consequence, looks back to Cause.
 Mischief, disguis'd, may deep and dang'rous lie :
 Pow'rless to hurt when obvious to the Eye.
 Grant us of Strength to shake the Walls of *Tyre* :
 Grant the March short : Have we not Foes, still nigher ?
 These *Hebrews*, wisely weary of us here,
 Kindly provide us nobler Conquests, near.
 Strong is our Hope : but stronger is *Their Fear*.
 Old Claims of Blood, from Dates so sunk in *Time*,
 Impel but faintly, where no Int'rest leads.
 One Step still higher, retrorsive let 'em climb,
 And, since so strongly *Kindred* pleads,
 CANAAN's whole Offspring, ev'n her TYRIAN Race,
 Name Parent *Noah*, but, in *Abr'am's* Place,
 Are *Midian's Brothers*, with like Claim to *Grace*.
 Last Night—nor think Night Visions always vain ;
 Oft, they the Wills of silent Gods, explain.
 Last Night, This strange, this thrice-repeated Dream,
 Harrow'd my aking Fancy, with the Sight
 Of air-form'd Shapes, that chill'd my Soul to *Fright* !
 For, ne'er did Shadows so substantial, seem !
 I saw you, Princes ! in th'imperial Tent
 Assembled, as we now, collective, meet,
 And on like Business bent :

When,

When, from yon sable Mountain's dire Descent,
 Fast in Pursuit of warlike *Oreb's* Feet,
 Roll'd a mean rustic *Loaf*, of *Hebrew* Bread.
 On-bigg'ning, into monstrous Bulk It spread;
 Till, gradual, an *unbounded Pile*, It grew:
 Whelming its Way, These Royal Seats o'erthrew.
 Then, rumbling, thunder-like, resistless, round,
 Swept the crush'd Camp before it, to the Ground.

Taught, by such Dreams—— ———

——There, *Oreb* held, no more:

But, rising stormy, look'd him scornful o'er.
 Take heed, presumptuous Prince! nor dare, said He,
 Oblique, to glance reproachful Doubt, at *me*.
 Dream for *Thyself*: hintful of base Distrust,
 Creep beneath Faith, through *allegoric Dust*.
 Souls, sagely impotent, or darkly cold,
 Ever suspicious, thus alarm'd, behold
 Th'uncover'd Climb, of Honour's active Flame:
 And dive through Virtue, for some *mystic* Aim.

Dishonest Mark, of an infected Mind!
 Whom should I *fear*? What View shall I conceal?
 Who shall *prevent*, where *Oreb* has design'd?
 Or, what, *resolving*, shuns he to *reveal*?

No.—Be it left to cautious Lumps, like *Thee*,
 To veil fear'd Truths, or through False Mediums see;
 My Heart's hot Beat on its *felt Strength*, relies;
 And flames too furious, to admit Disguise.

But, by revenging *Baal*!——

XIX.

— There, *Zebah* rose :

A Man of Noise, and apt to *interpose*.

Vain-glorious, insolent, and rashly brave !

His Courage, deaf to Danger, fought his Foes :

But, to his Friends, unsure Dependence gave ;

Bold, to destroy : but ign'rant how to *save* !

Impetuous he began ; and stream'd in Tongue :

Round roll'd his Eyeballs ; and his Arms, in tum'rous Gesture, swung.

Oreb watch'd stern, for what He meant to say :

And *Agag*, half-enrag'd, before, now smil'd his Warmth away.

What! must we, thus, in *civil* Broils engage ?

And can we find no *foreign* Wars, to wage ?

Last, let us jarr: nor will it then be *vain*,

When None to conquer, but *Ourselves*, remain.

But, let us, first, march on, to shining *Tyre* :

And leave Her *brighter*, in her fun'ral Fire.

I *hate* her : proud Engrosser of the Seas !

The wafted Pilf'rer floats from Shore to Shore ;

Freighted for Luxury, and choak'd with Store

While we, far *nobler*, dumbly unrenown'd,

Short-elbow'ing, from our Mountain's circl'd Bound,

Harraßs, with faint and fameless Force, the hardy Nations, round.

Were *Navies* ours, what could not *Midian* do ?

Then, might we Toils worth bleeding for, pursue :

Find some *new World*, possess, and *drain* it, too :

And spread the Glory of our Arms, where Fame, yet, never flew.

Now, barr'd by Rocks, or hemm'd by barren Sands,

Why call'd they *happy* such secluded Lands ?

Our

Our-crouded Hive ejects reluctant Swarms.
 But, when yon *Eastern Ocean's* Depth, behind,
 Shall groan beneath th'Excursion of our Arms;
 Or, o'er th'*Atlantic West*, we Outlet find;
 Then shall we grasp a Pow'r, like *Zebah's Mind*!
 Then shall the Nations trembling ask, what *Midian* has design'd:
 And our wide-dreaded Name be heard, in Ev'ry changing Wind.
 Since *Agag*, safely cautious, shuns to go,
 And fees sure Danger, in an *untry'd* Foe,
 Be it *His* guardian Task, to *watch*, behind:
 Distinct, in *two* strong Pow'rs, our Army, led,
 At once, shall hold yon *Hebrew Dames* confin'd,
 High, on their Mountain's wholesome Tops, to *whiten*, in the Wind;
 And shake presumptuous *Tyre*, with *Midian's* Dread:
 Faint-hearted Slaves, in their own Purple bred;
 By Pleasure soften'd, and by Plenty fed:
 Our tawny Soldier's iron Front, shall *look* the Miscreants dead.

XX.

Zalmunna smil'd, at *Zebah's* hope-wing'd Flight,
 And spoke, resolv'd to close the warm Debate.
 This Prince assum'd an all-superior Might:
 Honour'd in chief, by *Each* divided State;
 Tho', by Descent, and Right of nat'ral Claim,
 Lord but of *One*, to the mix'd War, he came.
 Haughty and fierce, his daring Bosom felt
 A savage Pleasure, in the Wastes of Woe:
 His cruel craft-revolving Depth of Mind
 Dark distant Schemes, of tyrant *Reach*, design'd:
 No Warmth of Pity his hard Heart could melt;

All Things were just, which rid him of a Foe:
All was beneath him, in the World below:
And Heav'n but bow'd to, that it might *bestow*.
Princes! said He, well-judg'd, Your Hopes appear.
Yet, you misconstrue *Agag's* Caution, *Fear*.
Skill'd in Discernment, let the *Wise* detect,
And point out Dangers, for the *BRAVE's* Neglect.
On, to the *West*: be *Tyre's* proud State defy'd.
 Israel, oft already try'd,
Dares nothing: or must dare on *Midian's* Side.
Phœnicia's peopled Coast, This March makes *Ours*.
Then lie These *Hebrews* central, 'twixt our *Pow'rs*.
Southward and *Eastward*, we, already, spread,
And edge their Tribes, with a removeless Dread.
Northward, accessless *Hills* run rough'ning on,
From *Arnon's* Ridge, to *ced'ry Lebanon*:
Add the wish'd *West*; and the Sea's *subject* Roar
Salutes *stretch'd Midian*, and adorns *her* Shore.
So, hemm'd on ev'ry Side, and, each Way, *near*,
Hope *Israel's* Service; and conclude her Fear.
Peacefully safe, a *Vassal*, calm and still:
Or conquer'd *Rebel*, to be crush'd, at Will.
Hebrew! return: and, soon as thou shalt hear
That our resistless Arms encompass *Tyre*,
Bid your Twelve Tribes chuse, Each, a *Legate*, fit
To kneel before us with their joint Desire.
Hope, *then*, what Terms Compassion can admit:
Away.—Find Comfort: and your Caverns quit.
Princes! debate no more. It stands decreed.
Sidon must fall: and purply *Tyre* shall bleed.

Baal!

Baal! blest To-morrow's Dawn; safe-guard Thy Host!
 Push we the March, ere *Spies* alarm their Coast.
Gideon glow'd secret; pleas'd, prophetic, gay:
 And Each King, rising, mov'd, a sep'rate Way.
 But, *Oreb's* gen'rous Heart, humanely bent,
 Studious to entertain his *Hebrew* Friend,
 Led him, impatient, to his feastful Tent:
 Where social Hours, in charming Converse spent,
 Brought the pleas'd Day to an unwilling End.

XXI.

All Night, the Camp hums loud, with murm'ring Swarms,
 And rings with Echoes, from the hammer'd Arms.
 Through ev'ry Quarter, hurrying Concourse pours:
 And Preparation toils away the Hours.
 At last, the chearful Morning's op'ning Eye
 Glows, through the solemn Shade, from high:
 Hov'ring, and moist, attracted Vapours rise.
 Then, the *Sun's* Outset, seen and *bail'd*, with day-discov'ring Cries,
 In worship'd Pomp, rolls glorious up, to Sight:
 And ev'ry ray-touch'd Mountain smiles, and ev'ry Field looks bright.
 First, the loud Drums a solemn Warning beat,
 And Each rous'd Soldier, prompt to War's Alarms,
 Strong, for the notic'd Movement, *girds* his Feet:
 Then, the shrill-starting Trumpet sounds *to Arms*;
 And All the swarthy Nations run, and at their Standards meet.
 Slow, move the cumb'rous Waggon, long in Train,
 And, dull of Motion, creak with Weight; and labour o'er the Plain.
 Next, loaded high, the bunchy Camels go;
 Stepping, with strait-rais'd Neck, sublimely flow:
 One loose-ty'd Length of living Line, in stretch'd and endless Row.

With These, for Safeguard from th'attempting Foe,
Selected Bands, of active Horsemen, ride :

A dreadful Battle-ax adorns each *Side* ;
And each right *Hand*, a double-pointed Spear,
To dart a distant Death, or guide one, near.

These, first, off-filing, the whole following Host
Receiv'd joint Signal, and to move began :

Each in his Turn, wheel'd martial, from his Post,
Rank behind Rank, and Man preceding Man.

XXII.

Seen, from a Chariot, on a rising Ground,
Along whose Range the Army must ascend ;
Or, near, *beneath* whose Brow their Way they found,
Oreb sat mounted, with his *Hebrew* Friend.
Thence, as the Squadrons pass'd, with courteous Care,
Inform'd him, whence they came, and whose they were.

My *Friend*, said he, for, from this happy Day,
Let us forever, mutual, *share* That Name :

It joys me, that our Forces march away,
And yield with'd Peace, to *Israel's* future Claim.

Swift let your *Legates* sent, firm Contract, bind.

Proud and imperious is *Zahmunna's* Mind !

But I, to aid your Envoy's purpos'd Pray'r,

Will, with a warm and well-asserted Care,

Curb his malignant Hate ; and make him kind.

Mean while, this fair Occasion, safely take,

To fit, and well observe our martial Host.

No *Strength*, brave Nations, *thus ally'd*, can break.

Such Weight oppressing, if we felt you *shake*,

This Truth, confess'd, secures your Country's Praise ;

Sev'n *Years* assaulted, you withstood us, *All*:
 While in perhaps as few triumphant *Days*,
 Before our death-diminish'd Pow'r, the Pride of *Tyre* shall fall.
 All the wide Bosom of the spacious *East*
 Had empty'd her Best Spirits, on your Land:
 'Tis true, by *Time's* wide WASTE, and *War's*, decreas'd,
 Many have fall'n: nor has *my* Loss been least.
 Yet shall you see the Numbers we command
 Thick, as the Locusts in the Wind, and countless as the Sand.
 Be it your Glory, you could Kings, withstand,
 Who grasp'd your State with such a nervous Hand.

XXIII.

In *Five* broad *Lines*, th'advancing Army moves.
 For, where smooth Plains extend unbroken Way,
Wide Order, ev'ry practis'd Chief approves;
 As least expos'd, so stretch'd, in form'd Array,
 And making double Marches, ev'ry Day.
 See, clear 'twixt Line and Line, what *Space* we leave:
 Some *Furlong's* Interval, unfill'd and free:
 Hence, no *Impression*, we, when charg'd, receive,
 Can, through more Lines than *One*, extended be:
 But All, each other, aptly may *relieve*;
 And, where *One* *shrinks*, th'advancing *Next* retrieve.
 Mark this approaching *Front*, with heedful Care.
My Ensigns only, All These Squadrons bear.
 I know not how, of late, so *chang'd*, they were!
 They want not Skill: and have been us'd to *dare*.
 See, how their *Wings* with *Iron Chariots* shine!
 On either Horn Four hundred. Each of These
 Bears Two arm'd Drivers, whom Three Horses draw,

Train'd to give Charge in a *broad-breasted* Line.
 Impatient of the Curb, they *bound*, and *paw* !
 From each strong Point of death-arm'd Axle-trees,
 Sharp-cutting *Scythes* emerge, with *edgy Slant* :
 These, in revertive Bend, we *move*, at Ease ;
 Rais'd, or declin'd, as the skill'd Guiders please.
 But, when out-driv'n, to rush upon the Foe,
 Rattling aloud their brazen Wheels advance,
 How weak and uselefs are the Sword and Lance !
 Rider and Horse, *cut through*, they overthrow :
 And while the shaft-arm'd Archers, from within,
 Point missive Deaths, in dreadful Tempest, round,
 The loose-main'd Coursers, with impetuous *Din*,
 Burst through the Ranks, and thunder o'er the Ground,
 With rapid Motion some, they trample down :
 Others, who, thronging back, evade their *Force*,
 The *raz'ry Scythes* with reeking Edges sweep ;
 And *mow* destructive, in their bloody Course.
 Of these Eight hundred, which you, passing, see,
 Six hundred have no other Lord, but *me*.
 Two hundred, watry *Moab's* Monarch owns :
 Our Lands conjoin : confed'rate are our Thrones.

XXIV.

Now, mark my *Foot* : in Three Divisions led
 The Midmost holds *my Country's* bravest Sons :
 Firm Souls ; to great and long-try'd Dangers, bred.
 Cross our Dominions, ridgy *Gilead* runs :
Gilead, whose Groves sweat sov'reign *Balm*, to heal
 The Wounds, her brave Defenders rush to feel.

Twelve thousand These; who, once, in Arms unskill'd,
The palm-producing *Plains* of *Midian* till'd.
Or scoop'd fall'n *Cedars*, on her *Mountain's* Side:
And, in light *Floats*, on *fishy Arnon*, ply'd.

Those to the *right*, confed'rate *Moab* sends,
Eight thousand *Spearmen*, arm'd in radiant Steel:

Bold *Hiram* leads 'em; *Midian's* high-priz'd Friends!
We love their Courage: nor their Worth conceal.
Near fenny *Nebo*, and moist *Hesbon*, They,
Cities, loudly known to Fame!

Dwell in deep Vales, whose rich, but stubborn, *Clay*
Does strong Resemblance to their *Nature* claim:
Valiant; but hardly modell'd to *obey*!

Who has not heard what *Giants* they o'erthrew?
Emims and *Anakims*, of duskiest Hue!
Broad-striding Champions! big-bon'd Monsters, All!
Hard, as their *Oaks*: and, as their *Cedars*, tall!

Near us here, my Foot's firm *Left*
Contains five thousand, Aids, from *Ammon* sent.

North-East, from *Moab*, bord'ring *Ammon* lies:
These also, *Giants*, of their Land bereft.

Ev'n to this Day, the Realm, a *Giant Race*, supplies.

In *Rabba's* Town, a *Proof* of strange Extent!

The iron Bed of *Og*, may, yet, be seen:

In *Length*, Nine Cubits—Four such Cubits, *wide*!

You know the Story well. His fatal *Pride*,
Vast, as his Bulk, *your* happier Arms defy'd:

And, by the Hand of your *Great Chief*, he dy'd.

On their Hill's healthy Top, delightfully serene,

A Soil, with *Sage*, and *Rue*, and *Wormwood*, green,

Their luckless *Balak* stood to *curse* your Race :

When *Balaam* bless'd you, to his Lord's Disgrace.

These *three* distinct Divisions, I command ;

Our Army's *first*, and not her weakest, *Line*.

Warm Emulation flames, through ev'ry Band :

Fearless of Death, in War's lov'd Pomp they shine.

See! how through Clouds of Dust they march: nor Heat, nor Labour, shun!

With glowing Temples urge their Way, and sparkle, in the Sun!

XXV.

But look!—the Army's *Second Line* comes on.

These, too, from *Midian*, mighty Founder! spring.

Hard, as their hilly Country's native *Stone*,

They serve a rich, but an ungen'rous, King.

Mean as their Monarch's Mind ; their Dress, how plain!

Zeb's homely Spirit, in his plumeless Train.

Five thousand *Foot*, thrice told, this Prince attend.

Three thousand *Slingers*, upon Camels, *ride*.

From This *rais'd Centre*, his Foot Cohorts bend,

And, Right and Left, two equal *Wings*, extend :

Which, rounding forward, Each with sharp'ning End,

In hollow Compass, deep, at once, and wide,

March, like a *Crescent*, in whose midst, their fullen Prince they *hide*,

Experienc'd *Archers*, These. Their left Hands bear

Tough and springy Bows, of *Steel*.

Arms of slender Proof they wear :

And the big *Shield's* safe Weight abhor to feel.

Across their Shoulders, loose, with careless Air,

Hang Quivers, stor'd with Arrows sharp and strong :

Hark! how they *sound*, as they step swift along.

From

From rock-built *Selah*, a secure Defence,
 For weak-soul'd Avarice, and Wealth immense,
 These half-dress'd, rough, unfightly Squadrons came:
 Neighbours to *Hor*, a Defart known to Fame
 For many a Chance! with *one*, by you, supply'd:
 'Twas *there*, your venerable *Aaron* dy'd.
 Southward, from *Moab's* Plain, the Region runs:
 And borders, eastward, upon *Edom's* Sons.
 Barren of Corn: a harsh, ill-water'd Soil,
 Where Lab'ers, un-refresh'd, would die with Toil;
 Did not rich *Vineyards* round the Mountains twine,
 And float the thirsty Glebe, with Floods of *Wine*,

XXVI.

See, next, in haughty State, with conscious Pride,
 Sov'reign *Zalmunna's* tow'rd us, tow'ring, ride.
 Bounding, he leads our *midmost* Squadrons on:
 Too wide extended, to be half discern'd.
 This Monarch, who *supreme Pretence*, has won,
 In the dark Myst'ries of Ambition, *learn'd*,
 Rules but, by *native* Right, a distant Land:
 Midian's utmost Southern Bound;
 Along the rich *Red Sea's* indented Strand—
 Wide, *that Tract*, his Realms surround,
 Where your *Great Moses*, *JETHRO's* Daughters, found.
 A Soil, that does with Ev'ry Growth abound,
 Tho' streak'd with tiresome *Veins*, of fruitless *Sand*,
 Ten thousand Horse, This mighty Sov'reign brings:
 Nervously rapid, as the Eagle's Wings!
 See! how, in Heat of Blood, they *paw* the Ground:

And

And champ the Bit, and Sidelong prance:
 And *tear up* half the Plain, as they advance!
 His *Foot*, that, bright in Armour, *wing* those *Horse*,
 Are Thrice ten thousand, fam'd for wily Force:
 Unweary'd Veterans, of fearless Heart,
 All, deeply practis'd, in War's bloodiest Art:
 Us'd to All Arms; and try'd, in ev'ry Part.
 These *Chariots*, which, upon their *Left*, roll by,
 Obscur'd by Hills of Dust, which, with 'em, fly;
 Are Six dread Hundreds, arm'd and guided well:
 The same stretch'd Number, wid'ning from their *Right*,
 Would terrify your wond'ring Sight;
 But the long Distance tires the aking Eye.
Zalmunna's Pow'r does All the King's excel:
 And what his Strength, and what his Aim, 'tis *Time* alone can tell.

XXVII.

But, *This* Way now, direct thy Eye;
 Where *Agag*, on his silver Chariot rides:
 Shining far, and seated high.
 Four milk-white Coursers, with hot-panting Sides,
 Vex'd to be curb'd, and struggling with the Rein,
 Draw him disdainful, o'er the smoaking Plain.
 This Prince is Lord of *Amalek's* wide State:
 His Seat is *Pharan*, and his Empire great.
Arabia's, midmost, rocky Tract, He sways,
 Peopled by one of *Ishmael's* wand'ring Stems;
 Call'd *Hagareens*, from *Hagar*, *Abra'm's* Maid;
 The swarthy Mother of this rugged Race.
 Northward, his Lands, the wind-mov'd *Desart* hems:

Where

Where wandering *Hords*, in *shifting Cities*, dwell,
 Safe from the Sun, beneath their *canvas Shade*;
 Thence, swift as *Roes*, the Savage Wilds invade,
 To hunt the lordly *Lion*, from his Cell.
 Three thousand *Horse*, This crafty Monarch guides:
 Each a skill'd *Archer*, who, in rapid *Flight*,
 Turns in his Seat, and dext'rous, as he *rides*,
 Aims his Shaft *backward*, with a dreadful Slight,
 And, *flying*, kills more surely, than in *Fight*.
 These, in *two* dusky *Cornets*, sweep along;
Wings, to That *Centre*, which, between, you see:
 Firm-wedg'd with hardy *Foot*, rang'd deep, and strong.
 Four times Five thousand, they are said to be:
 Abstemious Highlanders, All rough of Soul;
 Patient of Toil, but restive in Controul.

XXVIII.

Rash *Zebah*, last, brings up the gloomy *Rear*,
 Impetuous as a Tempest arm'd with Hail!
 All Passions shake him, in their Turns, *but Fear*:
 O'er his warm Hope, no Danger can prevail.
 Mark, with what martial Majesty he *treads*!
 Arm'd with a Spear, and looking fiercely round,
 On-foot, his Twenty thousand *Foot*, he heads:
 And measures slowly the unheeded Ground.
 Four hundred noisy *CHARIOTS* wing this Band:
 And, yonder, boasting the same Chief's Command,
 Six thousand *Horsemen*, loosely spread, behind,
 Close the gay *March*: and, with elated Mind,
 Lift their high Standards, to the following Wind.

Q

Happy

Happy Arabia's aromatic Plains
 Stretch their sweet Bosoms, where this Monarch reigns :
 There, the rich Hills a *gummy* Harvest, shed ;
 And *Myrrh* and *Frankincense* the Groves o'erspread.
 Ev'n from their Beasts, a musky Vapour flows :
 And the *Spice-breathing* Wind, with am'rous Softness, blows.
 From their broad Heaths, *wild Thyme*, and *Camomil*,
 Their coarsest Air, with breezy Fragrance, fill.
 Physic's wide Want, this *druggy* Tract supplies :
 Let the *sick Elephant* lie down to roll,
 From the crush'd Couch, *balsamic Odours* rise :
 And the snuff'd Scent revives his savage Soul.

XXIX.

As when some sudden *News* alarms a State,
 Of threat'ning Consequence, and full of Fear ;
 All meaner Cares and Themes, suspended, wait :
 While *This alone* does worth Regard, appear.
 But, when by slow Degrees, the Rumour *dies*,
 And thought-recov'ring Crouds *expect* no more ;
 Each to his proper Task his Care applies :
 And All is hush'd and languid, as before.
 So, while the Prince and *Gideon* heard the Noise,
 And saw the swarmy Legions passing by,
 No other Sound their hurry'd Ear employs ;
 No other Object fills their busy Eye.
 But now, the Army past, the Sound scarce heard,
 And, each chang'd Prospect roll'd in Dust away,
 Pleas'd, they observe the Plains about 'em clear'd ;

The chearful Birds, above their Chariot, play :
 And Nature smiling round 'em, *stilly* gay,
 Then, *Oreb*, rising from his Chariot-Seat,
 Beck'ning, gave Sign, to a well-mounted Band ;
 Which, shadow'd by a Grove's serene Retreat,
 At Distance, waited their lov'd Chief's Command.
 Sudden, they move ; and closing in, behind,
 The Prince, reseated, shakes the loosen'd Rein :
 Fleet, his Horses, as the Wind,
 With sounding Hoofs, fly rapid o'er the Plain.

XXX.

While to the guarded Mountain's barr'd Ascent,
 Their eye-directed Way they bent,
 To *Gideon*, thus the gen'rous *Oreb* spoke :
 Since my illustrious Friend declines to take
 Such due Returns as grateful Sense would make,
 And merits *Honour*, but, for *Virtue's* Sake,
 What shall I do, to shew him my Regard
 Of Greatness, I confess, *above* Reward !
 It must be left to Time, and Chance, to find
 Some *vast Occasion*, for my Thanks design'd :
 Till when, the Debt must rest unpaid, to load my struggling Mind.
 Mean while ; and, there, he from his Finger drew
 A *Ring*, that glitter'd, with a dazzling Ray,
 From the most radiant *Gem*, that ere, in orient Quarries grew :
 Wear This—in Mem'ry, but, of what I owe ;
 And, that I *mean* to pay.

XXXI.

Gideon, long-press'd, at last, averse, gave Way,
And smil'd, with thankful Grace : when, hid below,
On the Hill's Side, appear'd a *Hebrew Band* :
Which, by the late Attempt, instructed well,
Under a wary Chief's Command,
Took Place, the Night before, to watch what pass'd,
And future Mischief, in th'Advance, repel.
These *Gideon* saw : and from the Chariot stept ;
Swift after him, Prince *Oreb* leapt :
And, with a zealous Warmth of Heart, embrac'd.
Then, courteous, took his Leave : and, all in Haste,
Remounting, turn'd his Horses tow'rd the *Host* :
And reach'd it soon, and foremost shone ; conspicuous in his Post.





G I D E O N;

O R,

The P A T R I O T.

B O O K III.

I.

W H I L E to the Host his Way Prince *Oreb* bent,
 And urg'd his flying Coursers o'er the Plain ;
Gideon climb'd slow the Mountain's steep Ascent,
 Oppress'd with Thought, and anxious for th' *Event*.

Deep he revolv'd, with soul-afflicting Pain,
 What strange Success had crown'd his first Intent,

Crown'd with Success, *in vain*,

Should the chief Labour of his Hope imperfect, still, remain.

The Foe remov'd might soon receive Alarm,

And, doubly fierce, *return*, should *Israel* arm.

Well had he mark'd, and weigh'd, their dreadful Skill ;

Their countless Numbers, their rapacious Will :

And

And All their fine and vary'd Arts, to *kill*.

How should dejected *Israel*, then, make Head?

Who should effectual Summons, spread?

Or, did they meet, how hopeless still, they would, by HIM, be *led*!

Much he reflected, on the gen'rous Aid

Of *Oreb's* Friendship: mixing Hope, with Pain.

For, while *ZALMUNNA's* barb'rous *Pride* he weigh'd,

ZEB's *Av'rice*; *AGAG's* *Caution*; *ZEBAH's* *Rage*:

Wisdom's cool Doubt awaken'd sad Prefage,

That One Man's Truth might leave Dependence *vain*:

Where fraudulent Numbers *join'd*, averse, its Influence to restrain.

Distracted thus, amid the hurry'd Sway

Of cross-cours'd Passions, *clashingly*, combin'd;

Deeply perplex'd, he climb'd his pensive Way:

And, now, despairing, human Schemes, resign'd.

Now, thought of *Heav'n*, and left all Doubt behind.

II.

But, while, in *Midian's* Camp, his active Thought

Had, wisely lab'ring, trac'd his Country's Good,

His Country's Sons, by no such Virtue taught,

With equal Ardour their own Bliss withstood.

For, 'mid th'o'ermantling Stillness of the Night,

While *Gideon*, late, had hew'd the Grove's vast Oak,

The Priest of *Baal*, who, on the Mountain's Side,

Cavern'd, in solitary Silence dwelt,

Heard the loud Echoes bound, from each bold Stroke,

Which the Trunk, repugnant, felt:

Saw the fierce Flame revolve its blazy Light,

Whirl'd through the Gloom, and trembling to his Sight.

Scarce his astonish'd *Soul* believ'd
Th' alarming Witness, which his *Senses* bore !
Fearing, yet longing, to be undeceiv'd,
Th' apparent Truth, still nearer, to explore,
Cautious he climb'd the Hill, with quiv'ring Knees.
There, safe, behind the Shade of sheltry Trees,
Chill'd with Amazement, he had stood, and watch'd,
While *Gideon* and his faithful *Ten*, their daring Task, dispatch'd.

III.

But, when the pious *Hebrew* left the Place,
And silent Horror o'er the Ruin reign'd ;
Soft, the Priest, with tim'rous Pace,
Crept from his Covert ; now no more restrain'd ;
And, ghastly gazing o'er the naked Ground,
On which the dying Embers faintly shin'd ;
View'd the accomplish'd Desolation, round.
There, when no Remnant of his *God* he found,
Soul-freezing Horror ic'd his coward Mind !
Bath'd in the dew-drench'd Darkness of the Night,
Trembling he stood ; un-man'd with inward Dread ;
If an Owl scream'd, he started into Fright ;
And shrunk from ev'ry sighing Wind, that skimm'd his palsy'd Head.
Slow, the press'd Ground beneath him seem'd to rise,
Gradual a *Groan* broke mournful from below :
Out-roll'd a dusky Form, that brush'd his Eyes ;
And, gliding upward, ceas'd not still to grow :
Huge, as the *Oak* it rose from, It appear'd :
And its vast Reach, unmeasurably, rear'd !
Death-like, It rais'd an Arm, but half reveal'd :
For, ambient Clouds the shadowy Dart conceal'd.

Two ghastly Meteors, *loft* within its Head,
 With *emb'ry Glare* pal'd o'er its *spect'ry* Eyes :
 Sicklying the Sable, with a bloodshot *Red*;
 Whose glimm'ry Semblance, in appearing, *dies*.
 Nothing distinct was seen : yet, each dark Part
 Mov'd, in convulsive *Writhe*, and seem'd to *smart*.

IV.

This was the *Guardian Dæmon* of the Grove;
 Who, 'gainst superior Pow'r, too weakly strove :
 Forc'd, from his Charge, in tortur'd Shame withdrew;
 But, now, reproachful, *vaunted*, o'er the View.
 — *Wretch!* too unmindful of my *Shrine*, and *me!*
 Why hast thou *suffer'd* this atrocious Deed?
 Trusting *Thy* Vigilance, and Piety,
Thee, my Grove's sacred Guardian, I decreed :
 Myself, from Care of my own Altar, freed.
 But, by thy Absence, or Neglect, *betray'd*,
 Rising, I find my holy Hill profan'd :
Day's influent Range supplants my fav'rite Shade ;
 Burnt is my Image : and my Honour stain'd.
 But *one* Way, now, canst thou Perdition, *shun*,
 And 'scape th'eternal Anguish, of my *Hate* :
 Detested *Gideon*, this bold Act has done.
 Go : while he dares *new Mischiefs* meditate :
 Go : *rouse* the faithful Ministers of *Fate* ;
 Drag him, expell'd, from the *curs'd City's* Gate.
 Headlong, go, hurl him, o'er the Mountain's Brow.
 So, expiate *Ophra's* Guilt : and save the State,
 From high-doom'd *Vengeance*, that o'er-hangs it, now.

This

This not perform'd, presume no more to raise
Altars, or *Groves*, to my insulted Praise.
 Unexpiated Sins move Heav'n, in vain;
 Go: act my Sentence—or my Rage sustain.

V.

So threat'ning, mounted on a *Flash*, he rose:
 And, in a Peal of Thunder, *tow'r'd* away.
 Kindling behind, an Arch of Sulphur flows,
 And *streaks* his Passage, with a *Trail of Day*.
 Far from the Mount, with gradual Slope, he fell:
 And, light'ning downward, fought his native *Hell*.
 Thus, when, in War, the *death-embowell'd Ball*
 Slants upward, o'er some hostile Mark, to fall;
 In fiery Curve th'exploded Mischief flies;
 And sweeps, thick-sparkling, through the measur'd Skies:
 Till, on the destin'd Point, its Weight declines;
 And, bursting broad with flashful Force, for circlly Ruin, shines.
 Who can describe the Pangs, which now oppress
 The panting Heathen's superstitious Breast!
 Aw'd, and un-soul'd, beneath th'unruly Fright,
 Still, his Ears echo'd, to the *Groans* of Night:
 Still the thin Phantom skimm'd before his Sight.
 Wildly devout, and stung by frantic Zeal,
 Swift, to the Remnant of the hallow'd Oak,
Fearful, with wide-extended Arms, he ran:
 In pious Pity the mourn'd *Trunk*, to *clasp*;
 Weep its dry Wounds, and warm 'em with his Grasp.
 So, tir'd with Ecstasy, and toil'd with Dread,
 While his age-wasted Spirits flow'd away;

Two ghastly Meteors, *loft* within its Head,
 With *emb'ry Glare* pal'd o'er its *spect'ry* Eyes :
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 In pious Pity the mourn'd *Trunk*, to *clasp* ;
 Weep its dry Wounds, and warm 'em with his Grasp.
 So, tir'd with Ecstasy, and toil'd with Dread,
 While his age-wasted Spirits flow'd away ;

Down sunk the sleep-attracted Sage's Head :
And, senseless as his *Oak*, supine he lay.

VI.

There while he slept, unconscious what was done,
High, o'er his Weakness, rose the smiling *Sun*.
When *Joash*, mindful of the *Grove o'erthrown*,
Ent'ring the *Town*, with wise and early *Care*,
Anxious to make its *Motive* timely known,
Found the fought *Senate* close assembled there.
Of these, *Eliakim*, with fruitless Pain,
Had long regretted *Israel*, left by *God* :
Long had he view'd her Rashness, with Disdain,
And trac'd *Destruction*, in the Paths she trod.
Yet, taught by Pity, to attemper Zeal,
Patient, he waited some adaptive Chance,
That might contribute *Balm*, her Wounds to heal,
And her true Int'rest, to his Hopes, advance.
He, lately, busying many a trusty *Scribe*,
In secret Correspondence practis'd well,
Had *one charg'd Levite*, drawn, from Ev'ry Tribe ;
Safely, such Schemes, to ponder, and prescribe,
As dang'rous *Distance* made it rash, to tell.
Chiefly, he wish'd more Weight, in *Levi's* Scale :
Conscious that *Freedom* must, with *Faith*, prevail :
But little guess'd he, 'midst his cool Design,
How *God*, on *Gideon*, had vouchsaf'd to shine :
Less dreamt He of the *Idol Grove destroy'd* ;
Or what *new Wonders* his vast Views, employ'd.
Ev'n now, deputed, from the *sacred Race*,

Twelve awful Delegates, commission'd, came :
 Men, of high Wisdom, and distinguish'd Grace !
 Propell'd, by pulfive *Heav'n*, beyond their *Aim*.
 Now, first, in *Ophra's Senate*, taking Place,
 They learnt, from *Joash*, what, That Night, was done :
 Learnt, how an ANGEL had inspir'd *his Son*,
Baal's consecrated Altar to destroy :
 Learnt, with Astonishment, too strong for Joy !
 That, with commission'd Flame, *His shining Hand*
 Would rise, his Country's blazing *Soul* ; and *free* th'illumin'd Land !

VII.

While they, yet list'ning, weigh'd th'alarining Tale,
 Th'*awaken'd Priest* with loud Complaint rush'd in :
 Roar'd the hot Wrath of *violated Baal* ;
 And urg'd due Vengeance, on th'*all-damning Sin*.
 The wise Assembly heard, in dumb Disdain ;
 Yet scarce contain'd the Warmth, with which they glow'd :
 But now, cool Caution, they to Prudence, ow'd.
 The People's Zeal, they knew, was fierce, and *blind* :
 Hence, outward Marks, of purer Fire, restrain,
 Till Faith's rais'd Torch might *apt* Effulgence, find.
 Grave *Joash*, slowly rising from his Seat,
 Soft, to th'impatient Priest, this Answer made.
 No more, thus *loud*, thy boist'rous Prayer, repeat :
 Heard were thy Words : and shall be duly weigh'd.
 No Son of Mine, I think, has, yet, been known
 Actor of any Deed, he dar'd not own.
Gideon returning, charge him, to his Face :
 We, *but* for *Justice*, hold this awful Place.

VIII.

'Tis as I fear'd, th' outrageous Voice reply'd :

Guilt has its Judges, *on its Side* :

And, by th' Abettors of his Crime, th' Offender must be try'd.

O *Baal*! dread Pow'r! distinguish, in thy Rage:

Thou shouldst not, canst not, thus provok'd, thy purchas'd Wrath, *assuage*:

Let it but on thy *Foes*, THESE FOES, be bent.

Nor, with the Guilty, strike the Innocent.

Speaking, he beats his quiv'ring Breast; his priestly Vestments *rends*:

And, madly frantic, to the Streets, with out-stretch'd Arms, descends:

There, on his Head, the gather'd Dust he threw,

And, round him wide, th' inquiring Rabble, drew.

To Ev'ry List'ner, he repeats his Tale;

Tells the God's Wrath; and aggravates the Deed:

Dwells, on the dreadful *Apparition* seen;

Varies his Accents, and his Looks: and trembles, oft, between.

The frighted Multitude their Fate bewail:

Howl to the Priest, with *Baal* to intercede,

And, from his Vengeance, Them and Theirs, to screen.

Loud, and more loud, the rising Tumult grew;

At length, All Ranks, into Itself it drew:

And, roaring wild, outswell'd Controul; and Order overthrew.

So, into Towns besieg'd, some stormy Night,

A mischief-guided *Fire-ball*, secret, falls:

It kindles, first, some Roof remote from Sight;

Thence, breaks augmented, o'er the bord'ring Walls.

Contiguous Houses *catch* th' infectious Flame,

Which, tow'ring upward, meets the wafting *Wind*:

Then, driv'n from Street to Street, with hungry Aim,

O'er

O'er the *whole Range*, in blazing Sheets, *inclin'd*,
 Broad *Wasters* unresisted Passage find.
 Loud, into gather'd Rage, the mingled Fires,
 Combining, curl to Heav'n, with twisted Spires.
 United Help, to *quench*, now *vainly* aims :
 And crackling Ruin the wide Woe proclaims.

IX.

Alarm'd, by frequent and increasing *Shouts*,
 And terrify'd by Dread of vulgar Rage,
 The shock'd Assembly sat, involv'd in Doubts ;
 Measuring slow Means, the Tumult to assuage.
 Till wise *Eliakim*, reflecting well,
 That Popular Distaste, to *soothing Arts*,
 Remits th' Intemp'rance of transported Hearts,
 Chose rather to *prevent*, than to *repell*.

Down to the noise-distracted Streets he ran,
 Where, by the gen'rous Love of Peace, inspir'd,
 Feebly, with faint Advance, the Good old Man,
 Whelm'd in the Torrent of the Press, began
 To cool those Passions, which the Priest had *fir'd*.

Oft, in vain, he strove to speak :
 Th'unlist'ning Rabble drown'd his Voice, in *Roar* :
 Tott'ring and push'd, by Age, and Anguish, *weak*,
 With stagg'ring Steps, and Arms uprais'd, he labour'd to implore.
 Sometimes, the dumbly fullen Multitude,
 Aw'd by his Presence, their wild Shouts *forbore* :
 Then, suddenly again, grew loud, and rude ;
 And swell'd to stormier Madness, than before.

So, on the angry ORIENT's *rais'd Degrees*,
 Some Bark, untimely, trusts *repugnant* Seas:
 To the *black Whirlwind*, shifts her heedful Helm,
 Careful to rise with ev'ry climbing Sweep,
 Which, met transversely, would her Side o'erwhelm;
 And plunge her found'ring, in the foamy Deep.
 Now shocks her surge-struck *Stern*: now shakes, her *Head*:
 There while she *stays*, check'd, motionless, and dead,
 Loud o'er her *Quarter*, roars, with deaf'ning Sound,
 Some sidelong Blast; that whirls her, dreadful, round.
 Now, for awhile, the slack'ning Wind gives way:
 And murm'ring Seas her answer'd Helm obey.
 Then, all at once new-wak'd again, the mad'ning Tempests roar:
 Deluge aloft her cover'd Decks; and wash her Topmasts o'er.
 So far'd *Eliakim*; on ev'ry Side
 Oppress'd, and floated with the should'ring Tide.
 Now, short-liv'd Silence listen'd to his Prayer:
 Now, thick'ning Clamour storm'd his Ear; and stunn'd him to Despair.

X.

Joash, who weigh'd his Int'rest in th' Event,
 Marks, and *adopts*, *Eliakim's* Distress.
 Following, he seconds the good Seer's Intent:
 Fast after Him, the rev'rend *Elders* press;
 And the *twelve Levites*, All, descend, to try their joint Address.
 Aw'd, by such strong-combin'd Authority,
 The Croud, whom one Man's Influence fail'd to sway,
 Give back, when they th'united *Congress* see;
 And, falling off, by slow Degrees, melt, murmuring, away.
 But, restless, in his Idol's Cause, to *fail*,
All Day, from House to House, the Priest of *Baal*,

With lab'ring Malice, *urg'd* the menac'd Fate,
That lour'd incumbent, o'er the guilty State.

Paintive, he shap'd a thousand fancy'd Woes,
Woes, by their angry Deity resolv'd,
Should they, relax'd, His *known* Command, oppose;
And, in th' *Offence unpunish'd*, fall involv'd.

XI.

Night came: and, with a strong and sudden Blaze,
The smother'd *Embers*, into Contact fann'd,
Furious broke out, and shot rekindling Rays,
That flash'd Destruction round, on ev'ry Hand.
Gath'ring, with Swords, and Clubs, and Spears, and Staves,
Hoarse as a Sea, the rising Rabble meets:

With all its Tongues at once, the Monster raves;
And, with the Roar of Rapine, shakes the Streets.
Like some *new Breach*, too slightly stopt in Haste;
And *pil'd* and *turf'd*, to bar the watry Waste:
At first, effective, the short Hope is try'd:
The Bank, triumphant, checks th'assaulting Tide.
But, while, with dimply Smile, the Current glides,
And, edging on, with treach'rous Smoothness slides;
The sapping Moisture *mines* the Work, *below*,
And, trickling gradual, *eats*, and pierces, slow:
Then, gath'ring *Strength*, It flotes the soaky Mound;
Loosens the Piles, and heaves 'em from the Ground:

And All the Bank gives Way at once—and all the Fields are *drown'd*.

XII.

Eliakim, who judg'd, the People's Rage
Would, to the House of *Joash*, drive their Aim,

Found his precautionous Hint no *vain* Presage :

Thither, *Baal's Priest* directs the kindled Flame.

But near each *Portal*, and the *Hall* of State,

A faithful Guard, in martial Order plac'd,

Oft as the Rabble press'd, withstood their Weight :

Broke and repuls'd 'em ; and, vindictive, *chas'd*.

Oft thus dispers'd, oft making Head again,

In Ebbs and Flows of *Noise* the Night was spent.

Varying from Hopes to Fears, with pensive Pain,

The Senate, list'ning, watch'd th' unsure Event.

As Men well-hous'd, in wintry Storms of Rain,

Hear, from *without*, the show'ry Tempest *rise* :

Now, in *calm Interval*, the Wind blows *low*,

And soft and short Suspensions *bush* the Skies.

Then, the big Blasts, and fluicy Drifts, hoarse and impetuous, grow :

And the *strain'd Beams*, in swelling Gales, *groan conscious*, from *below*.

The Morning came ; and cross'd the Senate's Hope ;

Which promis'd *Peace*, with the returning Light.

But Day, restor'd, restor'd the rebel *Scope*,

Of headstrong Range, that had been curb'd by Night.

For, now, grown bolder, by their Number *seen*,

Fierce on the guarded *Hall*, th'Assaulters press :

The deep-rang'd Soldiers, firmly stretch'd *between*,

In warlike Posture, each try'd *Pass*, possess.

Here had Contention drawn a crimson Flood ;

And civil Fury stain'd her Face with Blood :

But mild *Eliakim*, who, coolly, dar'd ;

Whose Heart, at once, was *cautious*, and *prepar'd*,

From a high Gall'ry, *fac'd* the raging Croud ;

Taught 'em, by speechless *Signs*, how Madness *err'd* :

Then,

Then, gath'ring, distant, round, they grew less loud,
While the lov'd *Sage* thus charm'd the gaping Herd.

XIII.

Alas!—What Frenzy, my misguided *Sons*!
Transports your honest, but impatient, Minds?
Mistaking Zeal, when It thus *blindly* runs,
Never the Path, to *Reason*, finds.
Furious Revenge toils hard, for fruitless Ends:
He must not, cannot, *fall*, whom GOD defends.
Oh! be advis'd: fear *Heav'n*; not *Baal*; my Friends!
Curs'd as we are, *but*, for this *Idol Baal*,
Let not the Idol's *Priest* prevail.
Now, ere Redemption's op'ning Path is trod,
'Twere an *ill Time*, t'offend a pard'ning GOD.
Gideon— if *Him*, These rash Resolves pursue,
Not *uncommission'd*, Sin's black Grove, destroy'd:
Great are the Wonders, He was *born* to *do*!
Your Faith's Redeemer, and your Freedom's, too.
Blast not the promis'd Blessing, un-enjoy'd:
Nor *doubt* his Triumph, since by *Heav'n* employ'd.
Pensive, of late, beneath his Father's Oak,
A *shining ANGEL*, from the *op'ning Sky*,
Descending near him, *God's* Great Purpose, spoke.
GOD SPOKE:—Hear *Heav'n's* Decree, proclaim'd from High,
Israel REQUIRES him: and He *shall not die*.

XIV.

He ceas'd to speak: and the awe-silenc'd Throng
Gaze on Each other, with repentant Air:

Some bow their Heads, in conscious Shame : Some gape, with stupid *Stare* :
Some weep, some pray ; but All for *Peace* declare.

Baal's Priest observ'd it ; disconcerted, long :
At last, determin'd, Craft's whole Force, to try,
Loud, he broke out ; with a reproachful Eye.

—*Is Baal grown pow'rless*, since his Grove was *fell'd*?

Or, by their *formless*, fanfy'd, God, *expell'd*?

That ye, thus lightly, *lose* your gen'rous Aim,

And start, and tremble, at an *empty Name* !

Were *only Israel's* Natives blest'd with Eyes?

Are All the mightier Nations, round us, *blind*?

Where dwells this sad, sole, Sov'reign, of the Skies,

Whose *House*, no People, but the *Hebrews*, find?

Greater, than *Baal*, since he pretends to be,

Why *fled* we, from their Arms, who *worship Baal*?

Sure ! Such a proud, *unpartner'd* Pow'r, as *He*,

Might lend his *Vot'ries*, *Victory* !

If to inferior Gods, you must not *bow*,

Let this Supreme one *save* you, now.

If boastful *Gideon* has an *Angel* seen,

Ne'er let His Party *Baal's Resentment*, fear.

Since God's Arm stays him, Who can *step between*?

Why flies he *Tumults*, if his Call was clear ?

Follow *me* bravely. We'll the Truth explore.

If by our Hands he *falls*, we cut short *Sin*,

And *Baal* shall frown no more.

But, if *His God's* Protection walls him in,

And from doom'd Vengeance his curs'd Head *secures*,

Perish, *even Baal* ! and *Gideon's God*, be yours !

XV.

He paus'd : and the will-wav'ring Multitude,
 Aw'd and hush'd but just before,
 Found their first Purpose suddenly renew'd :
 And burst, affentive, into savage *Roar*.
 Thus, o'er the blasted Heath, where Storms have blown,
 The light, thin, *thistly*, breath-obeying *Down*
 Hangs on the Air, a Plaything for the Wind :
 Moves, to each Breeze, and can *no Balance* find.
 Now, soft-sustain'd, *sinks*, indolently *slow* :
 Now, *rises* rapid on the *Gale* : and leaves the *Birds*, below.
 Aptly, the *Priest*, in Choice of Season, learn'd,
 The smiling Moment's op'ning *Dawn* discern'd.
 From the next Hand, he snatch'd a glitt'ring *Spear* :
 Haste to the Contest Each brave Soul, said he.
Gideon and *Baal* dispute, for *Israel's Fear*.
 Whose Pow'r is greatest, come resolv'd to see :
 Let *his* God fight for *Him* : and *mine* for *me*.

XVI.

So threat'ning, to a Postern-Gate, with Speed
 He led the Way : and, after, rush'd the Throng.
 That Gate, he knew, was watch'd with slacken'd Heed :
 For, when, of late, the Croud swept, thence, along,
 With vow'd Resolve the Senate's Wall to force ;
 Its Guard, off-call'd, to stem Distraction's Course,
 Swift-quitting That *Out-post*, had march'd away :
 Prompt for Defence, where likeliest Danger lay.
 By this new Chance surpris'd, the Gate gave way :
 Through the wide Arch, with throng'd and boist'rous Sway,

Pours the mad Multitude, in shouting Swarms :
 With horrid Faces, wildly mix'd ; and rage-collected Arms.
 Fierce, o'er the Mountain, raves th' impatient Throng :
 And, with the Rush of Ruin, roars along.
Sicilian Ætna, thus, Eruption makes,
 When melted Sulphur swells her smoaky Lakes.
 Through the broad Mouth, out burst the flaming Tides :
 And roll their blazy Torrents down her Sides.
 Rampant the fiery Streams, un-chanel'd, flow :
 And, scorching dreadful, burn up Woods ; and *ride* the Plains below.

XVII.

Joash, who heard, his House design'd for Prey,
 Thither, protective, wing'd his timely Way.
 There while with Vows and Pray'rs, bestow'd in vain,
 He urg'd his Friends th' *Approaches* to maintain,
Gideon appear'd : returning from the Plain.
 To meet him, trembling at his Sight, the tender Father flies :
 Tells the near Danger—and with watry Eyes
 Thus, the safe Counsel of his Love applies.
 Go, fated Youth ! return : Thy Ruin shun.
 Never, till now, did I thy Presence *bate*.
 Pity thy Father's Fears, too *daring* Son !
 Nor to his Load of Woes add Thou the Weight,
 To make him Witness of Thy dreadful Fate.
 While he yet spoke, the Noise grew *near* and *loud* :
 And rising Dust proclaim'd th' arriving Croud.
Gideon observ'd it : and, with pious Care,
 Thus, gen'rous, interrupts his Father's Pray'r.
 Rev'rend and wise ! whose *Wishes* give me Laws ;
Fear were *dishonest*, in a Freeman's Cause.

God,

GOD, tho' a weak and worthless Hand he chose,
Forbids his Soldier to avoid his Foes.
Let 'em come on : They who in Numbers trust
Raife tow'ry Models—but they build with *Dust*.
He ceas'd.—but *Joash*, hopeless of Relief,
Hung on his Neck, with speechless Tears: and *look'd* persuasive Grief.

XVIII.

Gideon, who held the Multitude in *View*,
Clos'd his sad Father's pale and trembling Hand ;
In his brave *Brother's* : who, *so charg'd*, withdrew,
Hous'd in safe Post, to make defensive Stand.
Then, *fac'd* the Croud: chose a conspicuous Place :
And stood, the great Protector, of his Race.
As, when *Arabian Hunters*, in full Cry,
Run down the tim'rous *Stag*, with preyful Eye,
If, turning short, amid some winding Way,
They start a *Lion*, grimly couch'd, for Prey,
Sudden, the Dogs shoot wide : and, cowering low,
Creep trembling backward ; and their Chace forego :
So, the transported and tumultuous Throng,
Hot in their Rage, and rushing wild along,
When, unexpectedly, they *Gideon* saw,
Fell off, confounded ; and oppress'd with Awe.
GOD had impress'd him, with a Stamp divine ;
And o'er his Features beam'd an awful Shine.
Back'ning, they gaz'd, at Distance, on his Face :
Admir'd his Posture ; and confess'd his Grace.
His Right Hand grasp'd his planted Spear, with nerv'd and manly Pride :
His Left, bent careless, rested on his Side :

Half-frown'd his Brow, resentive Wrath to *feign*;
 But his keen Eye smil'd cold, with sharp Disdain.
 Sudden, the *Priest* of *Baal*, who stood most near,
 Felt his Joints loosen with resistless Fear:
 And *dropt*, *insensibly*, his useless Spear.
 The pitying Hero mark'd the Croud's Surprise;
 And slow disarm'd the Rigour of his Eyes:
 Yet, with reproachful Air, the Silence broke—
 And, with high Voice, and awful Mien, to the mix'd People spoke.

XIX.

Blood-thirsty Wasters of your Father's Fame!
 Haughty 'midst Woes! and wanton, ev'n in *Shame*!
 Why stop you short? Why *cools* your threat'ning Flame?
 Your *Souls* are worthy of your Aim.
 Baseness, by *Nature*, must all Danger, *hate*:
 Well add you therefore your whole coward Weight;
 To *crush* a Worth, you *dare not imitate*.
 Yet, whence could all this Waste of Anger flow?
 Did it, to *Baal profan'd*, such Transport owe?
Weak is his Godhead, if sustain'd by *You*!
 Why does not *Baal* the *Foes of Baal* subdue?
 Omniscience, sure! like His, th'Offender, *knew*:
 Why did He not *prevent* him, too?
 Rash Fools!—by blind and feeble Zeal *betray'd*!
 Are Men their *God's Protectors*, made?
 Shall *Baal* who could not *save Himself*, find Pow'r to give *you Aid*?
 Oh! what a DIFF'RENT GOD, your *Fathers* knew!
 No Help, from *Earth*, our Great JEHOVAH drew.
 From *His own Hand*, His blafeful Lightnings flew.
 The *dreadful Truth*, when impiously deny'd,

Proud *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, try'd :
Leagu'd, against *MOSES*—and misled, like *you* !
While they, *in Him*, his *GOD*, and *Theirs*, defy'd ;
Deep, in the swallowing Earth's wide Yawn, o'erwhelm'd with Fire,
they dy'd.
No *passive Baal*, unprompt in his own Cause,
Stood the dread *Founder* of your Laws ;
When, warranting Success, to *Joshua's* Arms,
Ev'n at the *Horn's* unfear'd Alarms,
Strong *Jericho*, in trembling Horror, falls :
And *Israel* enter'd her, at Ease, led o'er her *prostrate Walls*.
Was it *Baal's* Hand, that, baneful to your Foes,
To time-stretch'd Slaughter, doom'd collected Force ?
Held back, twelve Hours, th' impatient *Steeds of Night* :
And, on the *Sun's* declining Track, pour'd Floods of *length'ning Light* ?
Ungrateful ! stubborn ! ill-discerning Men !
Why are you, *now*, less blest, than were your Fathers, *then* ?
Reigns *Amalek*, more pow'ful, in *your* Land,
Than when you chas'd him, o'er his *native Sand* ?
But *four*, of *Midian's* Kings, remain our Foes :
Five, against meek and age-worn *Moses*, rose.
Twelve thousand *Hebrews* Those five Kings, o'erthrew :
These four, (base Diff'rence !) *twelve whole Tribes*, pursue !
Dream you, that *Moab's* present Chiefs excell
That *Eglon*, who, by *Ehud's* *Poniard*, fell ?
Or, will your *unman'd* Race, in Bondage wait,
Till some brave *WOMAN* rise, to save the State ?
Some *second Deb'rah* ! skilful to inspire :
And warm our heartless Sex, with *female Fire* ?

Go—since you burn with such resistless Rage,
 Go, in this Brav'ry, and your *Foes*, engage.
 Late, when at hand their shadowy Legions lay,
 When, on *yon Plain*, with your best Plunder, gay,
 Full in your *Sight* they shar'd your *Flocks*, in Prey;
 And led your *Wives*, and *Infants*, Slaves, away:
Then was a Time, this *Fury* to display.
 But *you*, for *warier* Charge, reserv'd your Fire!
 To no such *dang'rous* Vict'ries, *you* aspire!
 Basely secure! from the proud Foe, *you fly*:
 And Those, who would *efface* your *Shame*, ingloriously defy!

XX.

He paus'd.—For, conscious Guilt, with Terror mix'd,
 Oppress'd the aw'd and speechless Multitude:
 In murm'ring Wonder, they had, first, been fix'd;
 But *silent Expectation*, now, ensu'd.
 When, panting breathless, 'twixt their Haste and Fear,
 The rev'rend *Elders*, who pursu'd the Croud,
 Brought up the *sacred Twelve*.—These, now drawn *near*,
 Th'impressive Voice of *Gideon*, sweetly loud,
 Wafted his charming Music to their Ear.
 Then, with impatient Rapture fir'd, through the mov'd Throng they press'd,
 On the young Hero, *laid* their *Hands*: and his Great Purpose *blest*:
 Loud Pray'rs and Praise, to fav'ring Heav'n, address'd—
 To Heav'n, that re-assum'd lost *Israel's Care*;
 And shot bright Prospect, through her dark Despair.

XXI.

Baal's Priest, by slow Degrees, with straining Eyes,
 Wak'd into Reason; and repell'd Surprise:

Much,

Much, his recover'ing Thought revolv'd the *Fright*,
 That, o'er his Soul, rose cold, at *Gideon's* Sight!
 Fain would he, still, conclude his Vision *true*:
 Yet, wonder'd, then, whence his *Confusion* grew!
 And why, if *Baal inspir'd* his Breast, he had not *arm'd* it, too!
 Dim, burnt His Zeal, while check'd by conscious Awe,
 The rev'rend *Levite's* purer Flame, he saw.
 His Taper, form'd for gross and gloomy *Night*,
 Abforb'd, in *Day's* more pow'rful Shine, lost half its trembling Light.
 At length, exerting Force to speak his Doubt,
 Thus, his faint Diffidence was murmur'd out.

Much I applaud, brave Youth! your gen'rous Aim!
 Yet, ah! beware, lest ardent Thirst of *Fame*
 Disguise *Ambition*, with *Religion's* Name.
 Great was This GOD, if what we hear, from you,
 And what was heard by our dead Fathers too,
 Be not far more *traditional*, than *true*.

These *Wonders*, Ages past *pretend* so known,
 Why are they not to *us*, poor Suff'ers, shown?

Ask *Baal's Believers*, They, of *Baal*, unfold
 Potent past Trophies, pompously enroll'd:

But one *new Proof* would more *convince*, than *All* th' uncertain *old*.

He said: and pleas'd Concurrence catch'd his Voice.
 The Croud, th' Impression of his Doubt, receive:
 Let *Gideon's* GOD, they cry'd, now, *own* his Choice.
 Give us *one Miracle*: and we *believe*.

XXII.

Th'indignant Hero mark'd th'unfaithful Cry:

But, all unable to *comply*,
 Pausingly thoughtful, roll'd his angry Eye.

Strait---from a bushy Covert, near behind,
Rush'd a grim *Lion*, furious after Prey :

To rend some *Sheep*, the hungry Beast design'd,
From a fair Flock, which, there, at Pasture lay.

High, o'er his Back, his Tail, turn'd upward, wav'd;
Rough and thorn-tangled hung his shaggy Main :

His lank Sides, pining, *miss'd* the Food he crav'd.
Red were his Eyes; and sparkled on the Plain.

He saw the Prefs : and, with discov'ring Stare,
Stood fix'd, awhile, in *savage Glare* :

Then, with a *Roar*, that shook the Mountain round,
Sprung on : and, like a Tempest, swept the Ground.

This was a *Lion*, that, for many a Year,
Had in the craggy Hill's dark Borders lain :

And filling All the neighb'ring Towns with Fear,
Was hunted, oft, in vain ;

By the swift Horsemen, late encamp'd, on *Jezreel's* grassy Plain.

By frequent Danger, taught to shun the *Vale*,
Where, in Times past, his Hunger had been fed,

Hard-pinching *heav'n-sent* Want did now prevail :
And led him searchful, to the Mountain's Head.

XXIII.

The frightened Flock, alarm'd, together rise :

And bleating helpless skip, in Crouds, away.

Fierce in Pursuit the greedy Savage flies :

And while, amid the Multitude, they for Protection stray,

The Croud, as much alarm'd as They!

Roll o'er each other, a promiscuous Prey.

Close

Close before *Gideon's Feet*, with joyful Roar,
 The leaping Lion stretch'd his Paws, and one poor Bleater, *tore*.
 Back stept the Hero; and grasp'd hard his *Lance*:
 And watch'd, with lifted Arm, his next Advance.
 Thou shalt not safe *return*, said he, that dar'st presume, *thus near*,
 In Spoil of Innocence, to shake off Fear.
 Sudden, he saw the Beast *in Act* to rise:
 And, swift as Thunder, downward aim'd a Wound.
 Deep, through the Monster's gaping Throat, the *bury'd Weapon* flies;
 Vindictive Fires flash'd Lightning from his Eyes:
 Half an imperfect Roar its Passage found;
 And the *nail'd* Monster, quiv'ring, beat the Ground.

XXIV.

The ravish'd People their Applauses shout;
 And Every busy Tongue its Wonder told:
 To the dead Lion gathering *wide* about,
 Th'extended Monster they with Joy behold:
 Astonish'd at an Act so timely bold!
Gideon, just then, with glowing Foresight fir'd,
 Stoop'd, by directive Heav'n inspir'd;
 And, round him, from the death-disorder'd Ground,
 Gather'd a snow-white *woolly FLEECE*, the Lion's Paws had spread:
 Then freed his Spear from the retentive Wound,
 And, wiping off th'*ensanguin'd Red*,
 Wreath'd in a soft and milky Roll, the Lance's shining Head.
 Approach, ye stubborn Infidels! said he,
 Ye, who are *Lions*, where *but Sheep*, you see!
 And tim'rous *Sheep*, where ye should *Lions*, be!
 Once more *That God*, who set your Fathers free,

Unworthy as you are! will let you know,
That *Israel*, penitent, may prosp'rous grow.

XXV.

This said, in his Left Hand he took the Lance,
And held it, with its *woolly Crown*, erect:
Then, rais'd his awful Right, with slow Advance;
And bow'd his Knee to Heav'n, with deep Respect.
Dumb, the still Multitude attentive gaz'd:
Hush'd! expectant! and amaz'd!

While *Gideon* thus *invok'd* That GOD, who his new Hope had rais'd.

Thou! sacred, high, un-utterable, Name!
To whom lost *Israel* ow'd her antient Fame,
From whose just Anger flows her present Shame;
Pity thy devious People's harden'd Hearts;
Grossly deceiv'd, by *Hell's* too busy *Arts*.
Let some strong Influence *force* 'em to believe:
What their Soul sees not, let their *Sense* conceive.
If, by thy Servant's weak and worthless Hand,
Thou wilt *save Israel*, and her Pow'r increase;
Let *show'ry Rains* descend, at Thy Command,
And nothing DRY remain, but this soft FLEECE.

XXVI.

Scarce the pow'rful Pray'r was spoke,
When, from the West, a startling Thunder broke;
Continuous, and advancing still more strong,
Gradual it roll'd its length'ning Burst, along.
Fast after it, black gath'ring Clouds arise:
And, circling dusky, sadden all the Skies.

First,

First, a weak Wind, with hollow Faintness, *sings*;
 And shakes soft Moisture from its *sleepy* Wings.
 Now, the wet Breeze, with more collected Force,
 Thickens its Breath; and blows *direct*, and *hoarse*.
 Then, the big Drops, in drowning *Fierceness*, fall:
 And *rustling* Rains come driving, over All.
 Rebouncing Torrents the hard Surface *dash*:
 And smoaking Floods the darken'd Mountain wash.
 The People turn their Faces from the Show'r:
 And, on their Backs, feel the broad Cat'raet pour.

Gideon, mean while, upon the rising Ground,
 In a bright Ring, the heav'n-taught Floods surround.
 On *Him* no straggling *Drop* presumes to fall:
 For, o'er his *Fleece*, a sun-resembling *Ball*
 Rolls guardful round, to *slope* the Show'r *away*:
 And shows him, glitt'ring, in *abstracted* Day!

Behold! ye unbelieving Souls! he cry'd:

See! what a God you have defy'd;

And learn, from This, *Who* fights henceforth, on happy *Israel's* Side.

The People shout to Heav'n their raging Joys:

And *Baal's* Priest, trembling, *sickens*, at the Noise.

XXVII.

Once more, my God! cry'd Gideon, yet, once more,
 Indulge the *vary'd* Sign their Doubts implore.

Call off these Rains: unflote the delug'd Ground—

And, when All else is round me dry, *wet* let the *Fleece* be found.

Th'Almighty *heard*: and, swift as rapid Thought,

Reverted Show'rs to Heav'n are caught.

The beamy *Sun*, again, shoots *down* his Rays :
And, burns restor'd, with a triumphant Blaze.

The flaming Air ejects irradiate Heat :
And cross-flash'd Lightnings, in descending, meet.

As when some sudden Whirlwind's circl'y Sweep
Drives the light Straws, and lifts each scatt'ring Heap,

Smoothing the Surface in its winding Way :
So, the keen Radiance, curv'd and quiv'ring round,

Mazy and wanton in its vary'd Play,
Curls its flash'd Progress o'er the hissing Ground :

And close-adhering to the steamy Soil,

With its blue Tongues, licks up the Flood ; and works, with fiery Toil.

The *Fleece*, mean while, which swelling Moisture fills,

The raptur'd Croud behold with glowing Souls :
From its soft Sides, a *trickling Stream* distils ;

And down the Hill, in a thin Current, rolls.

This when they saw, they on their Faces fell ;

Struck with an *Awe*, which Hope could scarce repell :

They *felt* a pain-mix'd Joy, they could not tell.

But, in joint Voice, with gen'ral Ardor fir'd,

Lead us, they cry'd, Thou Chief, by *Heav'n* inspir'd !

Govern our *State* : for, under *Thy* Command,

Ophra, first blest, shall bless th'awak'ning Land.

Thus, was the *People's Voice* the *Voice* of God.

Gideon smil'd graceful, with assentive Nod.

On, to the *Town*, said he : Assembled, there,

These *rev'rend Sages* shall my Purpose share ;

Aid my Endeavours ; and *divide* my Care.

XXVIII.

Op'ning, they *move*, mid Triumph's wildest Noise,
 Ungovernably wanton, in their Joys :
Baal's Priest, *still*, *foremost*, leads the shouting Throng ;
 Converted, to the *other*, best, *Extreme* !
 Leaping, and turning, as he pass'd along,
 The Praise of *Israel's God*, was, *now*, his Theme.
 Next, came the mix'd and swarming Multitude ;
 With All their Tongues, and All their Hands, employ'd :
 Long Trains of Dust their peopled Path pursu'd.
 Then, was a short, respectful, Space, left *void*,
 For the charm'd *Elders*, two preceding two.
 'Mong'st *These*, the good *Eliakim*, o'erjoy'd,
 Oft, turn'd, the following Hero's *Face*, with new Delight to *view* :
 Arm'd with his *fleecy Spear*, distinguish'd far,
Gideon adorn'd his happy *Father's Side* ;
 Now, burst, o'erjoy'd, from his domestic Bar,
 And fill'd with All a *Parent's* virtuous Pride !
 Near, after *Gideon*, the Twelve *Levites* came ;
 Their Eyes on *Heav'n*, in rev'rend *Wonder*, bent :
 Their Souls contemplatively fir'd, with GOD's decreed Intent !
 Last, march'd the *Soldiers*, rang'd in length'ning Band ;
 These, from the City, had pursu'd the Throng ;
 Hast'ning, their menac'd Fury to *withstand*.
 But, charm'd, now *bail* th'*Event*, of purpos'd Wrong :
 Guard back their loud-acknowleg'd *Lord* : and, martial, mov'd along.

XXIX.

Ophra regain'd, to Council they ascend :
Senate and *Legates* share divided Place.

Moony, they, round their great *Deliv'rer*, bend:
 Who fills the *Centre*, with majestic Grace.
 Mild, from his Eyes, the radiant *Fire* to chase,
 A Smile, of soft Humanity, unbends his *placid* Face.
 As when, by Night, through some *still* Forest's Walks,
 A Swain, from whom his fav'rite *Child* has *stray'd*,
 'Twixt the dark Shrubs, in *list'ning* Silence, stalks;
 And, joyful, starts, at ev'ry rustling Shade:
 Breathless, turns short, attentive, to the *Wind*;
 And hopes, in ev'ry whistling Breeze, an *Infant's* Cry, to find.
 So tender, and so *still*, when *Gideon* spoke,
 Th'expecting Audience swallow'd Ev'ry Word:
 No breathing *Sigh* the solemn Silence broke;
 And scarce an air-suspended *Atom* stirr'd.

XXX.

Fathers of Israel! we have seen, this Day,
 That, if we *will* be bless'd, we *may*.
 God, ever gracious, has new Proof display'd,
 That Faith's Endeavour *cannot want* his Aid.
 Yet must not therefore Human Care be less:
 'Tis Ours to labour; as 'tis His to *bless*.
Heav'n but inspires us with a Will to *chuse*;
Reason weighs Means; and *Virtue* bids us use.
Hail, venerable *Twelve!* ye Souls of Prayer!
 Rev'rend and holy, as you are,
 Be it *your* Province, *born* to claim That Care,
 To clear *Religion's* Stream, from *idol* Mud;
 And strike lost Brightness, through her troubled Flood.
 My humbler Duty but prepares the Way:
 And bows th'awak'ning People, to your Sway.

Already,

Already, to *my* Care, They owe,
 That absent *Midian* seeks a *distant* *Foe*.
 Should *Tyre* be *Hers*, 'tis, for *our* *Safety*, won :
 The *Rich* retains 'em : and the *Poor*, they *shun*.
 Should they *miscarry*, they *new* *Pow'rs* provoke :
 And Strength *divided*, by less Strength is *broke*.
Zalmunna, Sov'reign of their haughty Host,
 Demands, from Ev'ry Tribe, one Chief, dispatch'd
 Envoys, for *Israel's* Peace, to *Sidon's* Coast :
 Now, be this fair Occasion aptly snatch'd !
 Lend, holy *Twelve* ! lend, All your rev'rend Weight :
 From your respective *Chiefs*, commission'd, fly ;
 Th' united Representers of our *State* :
 And shine and prosper, in th' Insulter's *Eye*.
 Alliance *granted*, we are free :—*deny'd*,
 Be it *my* Task, in *Arms*, to check their Pride.
 But, to wish'd *Peace* while All our Hopes are led,
 Wisely fore-arm'd, your *martial* Influence, try :
 And draw th' array'd *Allotments* to a Head.
Known, tho' neglectful, *These* can promptly *move* :
 And our *old* Force of warlike *Order* prove.
 Nam'd, and enroll'd, Each comes, when Summons goes :—
 Rous'd, by the fav'ring Absence of the Foes,
These, to Conjunction, *urge*, on *Ophra's* *Hill*.
 Send 'em, *unexercis'd* : the active *Will*
 Soon disciplines *Obedience*, into *Skill*.
 Some Tribes, remote, *too* *slowly*, may appear :
 Nor, *timely*, join our hast'ning Standard, *here*.
 But *Zebulon*, and *Asher*, bord'ring, lie :
Napthalia's Tract not far remov'd : the *Manassean*, nigh.

You, sacred Seers, from Those four Districts sent !

Remind your *Princes*, that *our* first Alarms,
Should they, from *Tyre*, call back the *Midian* Arms,
Bring *through their Bosom*, the revengeful *Foe* :
Thence, must Their Safety, from their *Courage*, flow.

That weigh'd Reflection wings their needful Speed :
And, since To-morrow's Dawn may greet you, *there*,
And heav'n-commission'd Wishes *soon* succeed,
These, who shall find War's Every *Nerve* supply'd,
From *Stores*, my previous Care shall, *here*, provide,
Might with so swift Advance, for *March* prepare,
That, on the *fifth* revolving Day,

They may their Ensigns, on these Hills, display.

Press their Departure, whose first Aid we need :
For, soon as *Midian* learns that *Israel* arms,
She may, perhaps, from *Tyre's* touch'd Wall, *recede* :
To blast our Purpose, with returning Swarms.

Now, rip'ning Harvest smiles on ev'ry Plain ;
To heap our Magazines, with needful *Grain*.
Foes have, 'tis true, our ablest *Horse* destroy'd :
But War's chief Strength is *Foot*, not ill employ'd.

Next,—would my *Father's* Will indulge my Pray'r,
He, to this Hope, would lend his missive Care :
He, first, to OREB, *Midian's* noblest King,
Should bear, precautions, this credential *Ring*.

Say, when His hospitable Eye, your welcome Presence meets,
Gideon, oblig'd, the Royal Giver, greets :
Greets him, with Claim of promis'd Friendship due,
Say, *Ophra's* Gen'ral—and add, *Israel's*, too :
Does, with new *Levies*, His known Wish pursue.

Tell him, to war on *Tyre*, as *Midian's Friend*,
We, for joint Use, fraternal Strength, extend.
Add, that Twelve *Legates*, hence, commission'd, go:
To sign *form'd Contract*, 'gainst our *Common Foe*.

XXXI.

He ceas'd: and joyful Wonder, and Applause,
Concurr'd, in Rapture of avow'd Consent:
Faith, from His Measures, bright'ning Prospect, draws;
And, to pale Doubt, enliv'ning Comfort, lent.
The Senate rose; on sep'rate Charges, bent:
The People, as they pass, transported shout.
And *Ophra's* echoing Domes resound: and Triumph reigns, throughout.



GIDEON;

XXXX



